

# Poems of Cloister and Jungle

*A Buddhist Anthology*

by

MRS. RHYS DAVIDS, D.Litt., M.A.

President of the Pali Text Society

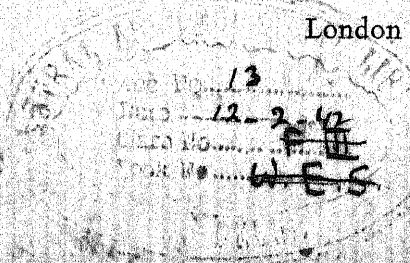


294.31

Rhy

7415

John Murray, Albemarle Street, W.  
London



294.33  
Dau.

*First Edition* . . . 1941

CENTRAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
LIBRARY, NEW DELHI.

Accession No. .... 7415 .....  
Date ..... 2.4.56 .....  
Call No. .... 294.31 / .....  
/ Rhy

Made and Printed in Great Britain by  
Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

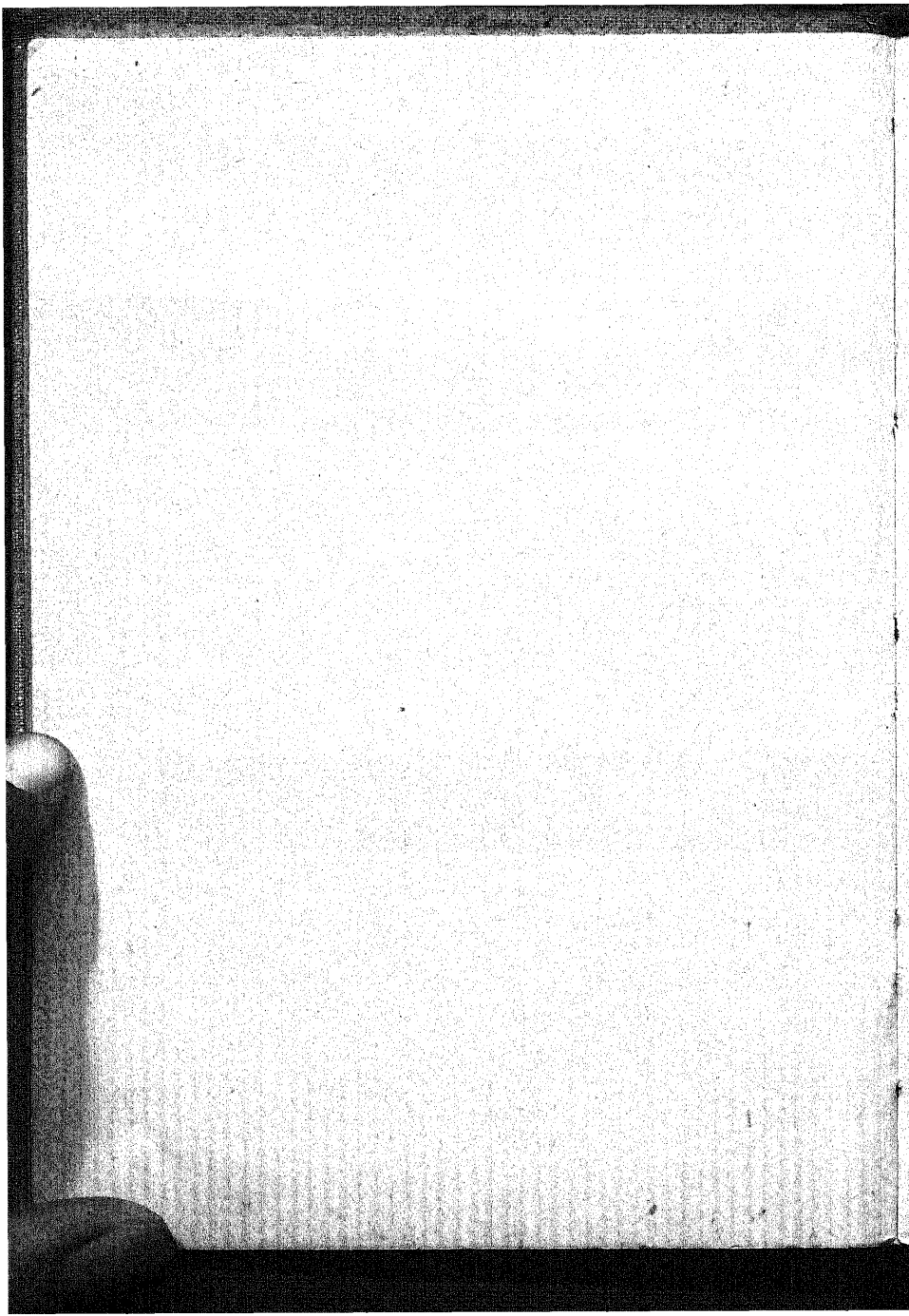


## EDITORIAL NOTE

*THE object of the editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West, the old world of Thought, and the new of Action. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.*

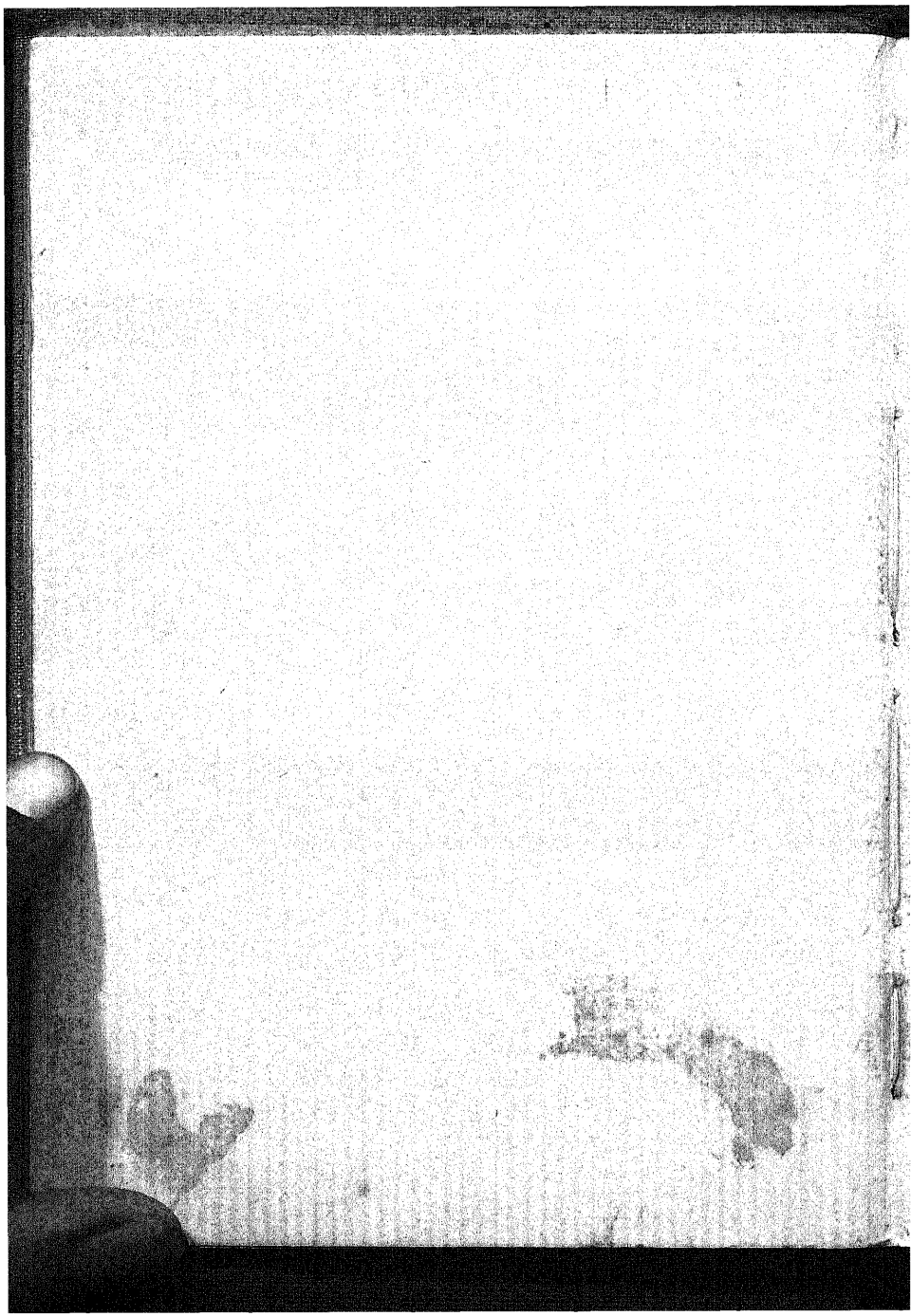
L. CRANMER-BYNG.  
ALAN W. WATTS.

50, ALBEMARLE STREET,  
LONDON, W.1.



# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	9
II	THE CALL TO COME APART . . . . .	16
III	WHY THESE CAME APART . . . . .	21
IV	THE PROSPECT HELD OUT . . . . .	33
V	OWING TO THE SELF . . . . .	44
VI	THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA . . . . .	56
VII	THE AIM AND THE QUEST . . . . .	74
VIII	SAFETY AND PEACE . . . . .	82
IX	LIFE IN THE ORDER : (1) MUSING . . . . .	96
X	LIFE IN THE ORDER : (2) TRAINING AND SERVICE . . . . .	106
XI	BIRTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE POEMS . . . . .	122



## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTORY

It is now thirty-one years since, at my suggestion, my husband, as founder of the Pali Text Society, expanded the Society's scheme of work to include translations from among such texts as we had already published. I had made a translation of what is, I believe, unique in world-scriptures : an anthology of poems by Indian nuns, members of the Sakyan, i.e. Buddhist, Order. And albeit I had a distinguished sponsor, a noted publishing firm had declined even to read my manuscript. We decided, perhaps wrongly, that this boded ill for better support from other firms, and that, like Britain, the Pali Text Society had best be its own island-fortress. In this way, to my translation of the *Therīgāthā* (Verses of the Elder-women) came the distinction of inaugurating a series, which in those thirty-one years has published twenty-eight volumes of translations.<sup>1</sup>

This first part of *Psalms of the Early Buddhists* I completed four years later by a translation of the *Theragāthā* (Verses of the Elder-men). These two volumes are by no means the only canonical anthologies by men and women of their Order. There is a chapter in the Third Collection of Sayings containing verses by ten nuns. There is the lengthy anthology of the *Apadāna* in the second Pali Pitaka, or canonical 'basket', also by nuns and monks, the text of which had not been published by the Pali Text Society when I wrote my translations. And

<sup>1</sup> I may add that the sister Series, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, has so far published eleven other such volumes, all save one from the Pali.

## INTRODUCTORY

there are other better known, translated anthologies, but which are not what we may call Confessions of personal religious experience, such as are all the others I cite. It is as songs of 'what I remember—I have lost—I have won', and, if to a far less extent, 'what I may win', that the "Psalms" and the ten nuns' verses are of quick human interest even now, even here.

Translation of the *Apadāna* lies on the lap of the future. Were my earthly span not nearly done, I would 'go to it'. It too claims to include verses by famous fellow-workers of the man called (later) the Buddha, and by some of the more noted first nuns. And its claim may be as true (or as false) as that of the 'Psalms' in the same respect. We work here with survivals which are, as to their history, largely submerged. What is fairly clear is that both anthologies are accretions built up as time went on. Always must the reader remember, from out his own wealth of books, that Pali literature has its basis in the writing down, when writing of 'books' broke in upon India from East and West, of 'Sayings' which had *long before* taken shape as utterances worth repeating and handing on orally. Also, that for mnemonic safety many such sayings had been converted from prose into metric form, not necessarily by their creators. Also, that such editing poetizers being not automata, but very human, may well have yielded to the temptation to 'improve', as to them it seemed, on their material, here inserting, there dropping out, according as later values prompted them, and according as that will to edify which, in that early day, was of higher importance than just 'the truth and nothing but the truth', prompted them.

Where then, in this so tragically evolving gospel, are we to place the singers of these poems? Were they indeed, as is claimed for many of them, contemporaries of the great Founder,

whom men came to call Buddha? Or do they so sing, that either we must see fictitious names attached to later verses, or assume that editors have got busy, at a later date of canonical compiling and revision, over older utterances?

On this complicated problem I touch in following chapters. Here I have but stated it, that readers may from the outset realize, that in this anthology, the coming to associate certain elect men and women with certain metrical utterances is by no means the relatively direct attainment it is with a parallel experience in later literature of East or West. Such association here never transcends the 'more or less probable'. The will, the heart of a man, a woman, still pulses strongly through most of them, but only now and then can we, laying the verses beside sayings from other books about him or her, judge that here does just she, just he still speak to us down the ages.

Is it then of importance to us as interested in utterances such as these, to know whether what we read belongs, or does not belong, to the very early days of the Buddhist movement? If the reader feels that such a question worries him and mars his literary or religious attention, let him forget what I have said and pass to the next chapter. Better still, let him read the twin anthology itself. But if in him is a thirst for the historically true, let him consider this. The Buddhist movement started, as a reform, in the midst of a very notable turn-over in Indian religion which we may call Immanence, involving, in its turning away from seeing Deity in nature-forces, to discerning 'That' in the divine potentiality of man's nature, a tremendous uplift in faith as to what we may become. But in course of time that reform (as to externals) broke down into a falling away from, an opposition to, its Mother-cult. So that what Indian Buddhism came to be, what its south Asian daughters came to be, what their Buddhism has now come to be, is very



## INTRODUCTORY

different from Buddhism at its birth. The great uplift in a divine More has come to be a seeing progress in religious life as the understanding of a Less, that is best brought to an end, and man as nothing higher than a bodily and mental complex, dissolving at death and somehow reforming as new complex till final dissolution called nirvana is attained.

There are other important signs in these poems that the oldest landmarks were becoming mixed up with other notable word-features. But consideration of these involves the very marrow of the compositions, and must be dealt with after matters introductory. Herein I do but seek to remind the reader of what palimpsests we have before us in them. And that is a gradually increasing treasure—or what was held to be such—of Sayings coming to birth in a bookless world, where writing was confined to the handicraft of a few, stippling with indenting style on thin metal plates records of some transfer or barter of property. The uttered word was, if held as from a worthy source, noted by listeners, repeated, passed on from teacher to pupil, and then from repeater to other repeaters in a living library. Further the monastic settlement included a group of brahmin disciples, who, attracted to the new teaching by some felt want in their own cult, turned some portions from prose into metre ; further, as the thesaurus increased, sayings about this and that by these and those, were probably edited to suit changing values. No simple matter, even when fixed with relative permanence in writing, are these old Indian compositions, and we are lucky indeed if to any extent, in any tenable way, we can place in time the birth of any one of them.

This need not spoil the pleasure awaiting the lover of poetry who can read Pali, or altogether of one who has to make good with translation. The poems are of absorbing human interest,



## BEAUTY IN THE POEMS

told for the most part with a directness, a naturalness, an absence of wordiness, often a pathos which lift them above dull and drab telling. And more, there is at times a combined beauty of word and image entitling them to rank as world-poetry. I will cite just two where I find this beauty notably. In the first, too, there is an interesting Indian way of checking natural beauty. I quote the first couplets.

Kāl' Udāyin, a king's messenger and convert :

Now crimson glow the trees, dear lord, and cast  
Their ageing foliage in quest of fruit.  
Like crests of flame they shine irradiant,  
And rich in hope, great hero, is the hour.  
Verdure and harvest-time in every tree,  
Where'er we look delightful to the eye,  
And every quarter breathing fragrant airs,  
While leaf is falling, yearning comes for fruit.  
'Tis time, O hero, that we set out hence.  
Not over hot nor over cold, but sweet,  
O Master, now the season of the year.  
O let the Sakyans and the Koliyans  
Behold thee with thy face set t'wards the west,  
Crossing the border river Rohinī.

Chūlaka looks down from his hill-cave after the storm :

Hark ! how the peacocks make the welkin ring,  
Fair-crested, fine their plumes and azure throat,  
Graceful in shape and pleasant in their cry.  
And see how this broad landscape watered well  
Lies verdure-clad beneath the dappled sky.  
Healthy thy frame and fit and vigorous  
To make good progress in the Buddha's Rule.  
Come then and grasp the rapt thought of the saint,  
And touch the crystal bright, the subtly deep,  
Th' elusive mystery—even the Way  
Where dying cometh not, ineffable.

## INTRODUCTORY

Note how, from the start he varies the often overworked vowel *a* :

*Nadanti morā susikḥā supekḥunā sunīlagīvasumukhā sugajjino.*

Even the man who, in arranging the selected poems uttered, or wrote his verses, introductory and final, to them shows no mean poetic gift : listen !

As to the call of distant lions' roar  
Resounding from the hollow of the hills,  
List to the psalms of them whose selves were trained,  
Telling us messages anent the self,  
How they were named, and what their kin, and how  
In Dharm' they lived, and how they found release.  
In wisdom and unfaltering they lived ;  
Now here, now there they saw the vision gleam ;  
They reached, they touched the ageless deathless Way,  
And retrospective of th' accomplished,  
They set to speech these matters of their quest.

. . . . .  
Singing the paean of their lions' roar,  
These children of the Buddha, sane immune,  
The haven won, waned out like fires extinct.

It may be held fanciful, but in this opening and ending I trace an earlier and a later comment, as if the latter had been added by a closer of the anthology long after the earlier comment had been made. For the former lines tell of man fostering his growth by 'making become' ("trained") the self or spirit by "living in Dhamma" in the way "leading to the Spirit or Self" (*att'upanāyikā*), which, in the guise of later Buddhism and of the exegesis, I meagrely rendered as just 'themselves'. But the latter lines use the later phrase "*Buddha-puttā*" and the nirvanic term 'waned out'. These reflections coming chapters

## WORDS AND VALUES

will make clearer. In "matters of their quest" I have given two meanings of the one term *attha*—but this will need a chapter to itself. "Lions' roar" was the older idiom for 'confession of faith'.

## Chapter II

### THE CALL TO COME APART

I have so far found the departure so often met with in Buddhist literature called 'coming forth', and by us 'leaving the world', treated as an Indian institution *without known beginning*. Buddhism is not credited with having initiated it, but only with extending it. Not in that it gave unwilling sanction to women also to leave the world. Herein Jains were perhaps the pioneers. It was in breaking down the barrier that, in the case of brahmins, debarred a man from leaving the world till old age was at hand, and in conferring 'ordination' also on the middle-aged, the youth and even the boy, that the Sakyan mission-movement quickened the growth of the monastic vogue. This licence to a man (and later on to a woman) to shirk the sharing in the community's work, defence and social life, as well as in the upkeep of its numbers not unreasonably aroused indignation. The 'Basket' of the Order's beginning and rules tells of this; how "the Samana Gotama causes fathers to beget no sons; wives to become widows" and so on, testifying to the new extension of world-forsaking.<sup>1</sup>

Now the sanctioned retirement of the ageing head of a family, in favour of his eldest son, who as was customary had not made a new home for himself on his marriage, may have been an arrangement satisfactory to him who retired, to the son, the family, the community. But a satisfactory reason has yet to be found for the expansion of this leaving the world,

<sup>1</sup> *Vinaya Texts* (S.B.E.), i, p. 150.

for this taking up, *not*, in the first instance, a life of relatively social cenobitism in settlements—that came later—but the lone life of the recluse, the man of the jungle, of one who lived, not by a daily alms-round, but by what he could glean for food from what nature offered. It is a deeply interesting problem. I would only submit points that should not be passed over.

(1) One feature of world-forsaking does not call for historical adjustment; I mean man's craving to be alone—woman's too for that matter. Not merely the negative distaste, at times or always, for nearness of one's fellows, but the positive taste for naught but one's own company. The French use for this *farouche*, though not with the meaning of 'ferocious', but rather with that of a Buddhist idiom: *miga-bhūtena cetasā*<sup>1</sup>: 'with heart become of the wild'. This disposition of resorting, in the Plotinus idiom, "alone to the alone", does not in itself indicate a religious resource. As a streak in human nature and ineradicable, it may make for irreligion, since it shuns man's need of his fellows to advance himself in his religious quest. But there runs in it, maybe unconsciously, a sense of beauty in things neither human nor bound up with human society. Such things we find in the anthologies. And they may have been a factor in, shall I say, legitimizing the pursuit of resorting to 'the Alone' as a lawful way of living.

(2) The word denoting the thus world-forsaking recluse was *śramana*, in Pali, *samaṇa*. Its date as emerging is, more or less, bound up with the date of section 4 of one of the oldest Upanishads.<sup>2</sup> Its occurrence is not as of a novelty, but just incidental. In deep sleep namely, human relations fade out: "mother becomes no more mother . . . *śramana* no more *śramana*". But it is the *one and only mention* of the term in

<sup>1</sup> Pron. *chaytāsā*.

<sup>2</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* iv, 3, 22.

pre-Buddhistic literature. In the Pali Suttas on the other hand, it is ever recurring. A Greek chronicler of the third century B.C. makes *sarmanoi* and sophists (presumably brahmins) the two classes of 'philosophers' in North India.<sup>1</sup> Earlier than this, as is probable, we find the Founder of Buddhism, Gotama of the Sakyans, addressing disciples as "men called *samaṇa*'s : what is that?" The address stands out worthily from the more usual type of homily, and has in it a suggestion of novelty in the term.

"People know you as being *samaṇa*'s. If you are asked : '*Samaṇa*'s—what is that?' admit : 'Yes, we are.' But to yourselves say : 'We will take up and practise those things that make the *samaṇa* ; thus will our profession become real, our pledge a thing that has become ; . . . and our leaving the world will become not sterile, but fertile.' You should train yourselves thus . . . (asking) 'What further remains to be done?' Train yourselves saying : 'Very pure will we become in deed, word and thought. We will neither exalt the self nor despise the other man,' " . . . and so on.

Here is some evidence, at once of the relative newness in the term and of its covering, in world-forsaking, the cenobite as well as the lone recluse. Both careers are in the Suttas recognized as legitimate, but the latter is held to be prone to laxity in cenobitic propriety and enjoined to mind his step if he came in from the wilds.<sup>2</sup>

(3) It is possible that a formula surviving in the Suttas, describing the life of the lone recluse, gives a true hint as to what was the stimulus which so expanded the practice of retiring from communal life about the birth time of Buddhism. As a complete description it has got merged, I imagine, into the set wording of later values. But it ends this on a remark—

<sup>1</sup> MacCrindle.

<sup>2</sup> *Further Dialogues*, i, 332 f.



able and rare note. Such a man is said "to torment neither himself nor others . . . but to live as to things seen uncoveting, as to himself as waning, as become cool, as experiencing happiness, *as become God*". This compound is applied elsewhere and very rarely, only to the Founder : (*attanā Brahma-bhūtena*). It is nowhere equated in Buddhist scripture, but is frequent in the Upanishadic teaching of Immanence. There it is taught that, whereas the man is the Divine Spirit (*Ātmā*), he on finally leaving the earth "becomes Brahma". This great turn-over in religion from Veda cult may well have profoundly impressed men of deeper intuition, so that they felt drawn to ponder this, concerning the 'man', away from men. It was too wondrous to be well made clear amid the values of the world, the aims, the unquiet, the warring, the playing, the work, the troubles, the futilities of worldly life. It was a matter needing quiet, calling for realization by each man for himself.

So I wrote ten years ago, nor have I since seen anything to convince me I was wrong. The compound is not to be found in pre-Buddhistic literature of Vedas or Brāhmaṇas ; a *reason* for it is to be found in the literature of Immanence. It occurs three times in the *Bhagavad-gītā* of the *Mahābhārata*, where in the 'yogī', the earnest religious student, having "inner joy, pleasance and light, has *become Brahma*, attains to Brahmanirvana".<sup>1</sup> Here then, at a date now reckoned later, the term has emerged. Had it perhaps been growing in strength when Immanence was finding new expansion in Jainism and Buddhism? Were men here and there, not the professional teacher perhaps, but such as we have called mystics, prompting themselves and each other, no matter at what age, to "come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile",<sup>2</sup> and commune with yourselves over this word of wonderful mean-

<sup>1</sup> V, 24 ; VI, 27 ; XVIII, 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ev. Mark* vi, 31.

## THE CALL TO COME APART

ing, of sublimest hope? It is true that the Immanence-concept is no longer present to the sayers in the Anthologies. Their values had everything in common with the formula quoted, save only the final compound: *Brahma-bhūta*. But mainly their day had come to dwell on ideals conceived negatively. They found the way blazed in front of them, and it is with this blazing that we have just now been concerned.



### Chapter III

#### WHY THESE CAME APART

But these men and women of the Buddhist anthology did not all of them come apart from the world because—to quote once more the *Gītā*—"they were becoming ripe for becoming Brahma". In their verses the very meaning of this word (save in a few prefixes) was different; it refers, not to a supremely, neutrally conceived Highest, source and culmination of life, but, as a masculine term: *Brahmā*, to governor and denizens of a world transcending the next world, but not therefore immortal. Buddhist teaching taught not a "becoming Brahma", but a possible companionship (wrongly translated 'union') with these denizens hereafter, to be accomplished by living here up to the moral standard held to be observed by them.

I would add here, that I have long ceased to translate the words *deva* and *devatā*, terms for worthy beings in the Unseen, by gods and goddesses. The teaching of Immanence had brought about, on the one hand a disdeification of Vedic nature-gods, and on the other, a conceiving of the worlds as populated by beings still called *deva*'s, but conceived as keenly interested in us of earth.

Although thus otherwise conceived, the prescribed aim taught as the religious quest in early Buddhism was no less a something that made for a man's welfare. But, as with the *Gītā*, it was a welfare sought by the man for whom the world forsaken had become the world well lost. Anxious at first, it

## WHY THESE CAME APART

might be, for riddance of this or that, it was to find and enjoy something he came to see was more important. If he sought 'forsaking' in a special sodality, it was to seek ideals by way of what seemed a better routine; if he sought forsaking in solitude, it was to enjoy a liberty the world could not offer him. This way or that, it was carefree that he became.

As recluse, even in Indian woods, this could mean a rough time :

Thou who foredone with cramping pains,  
Dwell'st in the jungle, in the woods,  
Thy range confined, in hardship dire—  
How wilt thou fare ?

With bliss and rapture's flooding wave  
This mortal frame will I suffuse.  
Though hard and rough what I endure,  
Yet will I in the jungle dwell.

For I have seen what friends have wrought :  
Their striving roused, their straining mind,  
Their staunch and ever onward stride,  
In concord bound—and having seen,  
E'en in the jungle will I dwell. (Ver. 351-3.<sup>1</sup>)

Nor, be it noted, was the time merely carefree. He was attuning his will to attain something that seemed to him supremely important.

If the welfare he sought was compatible with cenobitic life, it was less of a rough time that befell him. The laity were willing to fill his bowl, and to give clothing and housing. He could find friends among the fellow-monks—no, they never called each other 'brother' or 'brethren'. We translators

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also verses 207, 208.

## MATERNAL INFLUENCE

said so from a borrowed traditional usage, because it was convenient. But they could revere their teachers ; they could feel father-love for their pupils.

That which my teacher wished that I should know  
In doctrines good, and of his kindness taught  
To me who for th' Immortal longed :  
That now, even the task prescribed is done.

Noble thy cult and thou hast guided me.  
Compassionate, 't is thou hast favoured me.  
Thine admonitions have not proved inept.  
Once an apprentice, now am I adept. (Ver. 330, 334.)

See, Sāriputta, how the little lad  
Holding his jar of water comes along !  
Rapt all his being, utterly intent,  
Noble his carriage on his gracious quest,  
And well matured in supernormal power,  
This novice of our Anuruddha's band. (Ver. 431 f.)

When the Order came to include women, we learn from the first 'Basket', the Vinaya Pitaka, that formally there was not equality between them and the monks. All nuns were on the footing of pupils. But, as we might expect, the women poets include exceptional women. Thus in the nun known only as Vaddha's Mother, the son being noted in the order for 'learning' and preaching, the mother maintains her maternal influence over the son, as may be gathered from both her verses and his. Here I cull from both :

The Way that sages such as these have trod  
Leading to that pure vision how they may  
Make a sure end of Ill—do thou, dear lad,  
Study and cause to grow to thine own weal.

## WHY THESE CAME APART

O well in sooth my mother used the goad !  
I marked her word, and by my parent taught,  
I stirred up effort, put forth all my strength,  
And won the goal, enlightenment supreme.

He mildly turns the tables, but she affirms her equality, he acknowledging :

Now in good hope and faith thou speakest thus,  
O little mother ! well I trow for thee,  
Dear mother mine, no jungle bars the way.

Ah, no ! my Vaddha, whatsoe'er I do, or say,  
Or think, in things or great or small,  
Not e'en the smallest growth of jungly vice  
Yet standeth in the onward way for me.  
In me who am alert with strenuous zeal.

Oh splendid was the spur my mother used !  
And no less merciful the chastisement  
She gave to me, even the rune she used  
Fraught with its burden of sublimest good.<sup>1</sup>  
I heard her words, I marked her counsel wise,  
And thrilled with righteous awe as she called up  
The vision of salvation to be won,  
And night and day I strove unweariedly  
Until her admonitions bore their fruit,  
And I at peace could touch the utter peace.

But what were the things we find driving these men and women to relatively carefree conditions ? Life in the world was after all the life of the great majority : what then do we find had come so to upset this as to call for so great a break-away ?

As to that there was not always the need for a breaking away. We meet with cases of what was a bringing in. Such

<sup>1</sup> *Param'attha*. See Chap. VII.

## REASONS

as parents like the Hebrew Hannah presenting their child to the fostering care of the Order, either because they had already nine to provide for, or because one had been born to them only after many prayers : so Bhadda (Faustus or Felix) tells us :

An only child was I, to mother dear  
And to my father dear. By many a rite  
And much observance was I gotten, ay,  
And many prayers. To do me kindness they,  
My good desiring, and my happiness,  
Conducted me, father and mother too,  
Into the presence of the Buddha blest.

Him do we give, O Lord, to thee, that he  
May wait as servant on the Conqueror. . . .

(For me this seems a somewhat unreal picture, suggestive of an institution and titles of long standing.) Another picture is that of a father perplexed by many suitors for his daughter's hand, and sending her, not unwilling, into the Order, and one wonders whether his real wish was to avoid paying her dowry. Less forced seem instances of friend, or son following a friend's or father's lead respectively. Still less so perhaps, the many instances given of the strong personal, the, shall I say, magnetic influence irradiating from the founder Gotama. Here is such an instance :

O welcome to me was that day of spring,  
When at Gayā, at Gayā's river-feast,  
I saw the Buddha teach Dhamma supreme,  
Saw that great light, teacher of multitudes,  
Him who had won the Highest, Guide of all,  
The conqueror of men and gods, unrivalled seer.  
Mighty magician, hero glorious,  
Far-shining splendour, pure, immune of mind,  
In whom all cankers waned away, Teacher  
For whom whence should come fear? . . . (287 f.)

## WHY THESE CAME APART

and there are many others. There may be here too editorial manipulation, especially in the term *sambuddha*, whereof more later ; but that in the Founder's physical presence and its effect on men we have a historical fact I am convinced. Here after all is nothing 'supernatural', but an effect felt by many anywhere, anywhen as emanating from this man or that woman.

And there seem to have been yet other motives provoking a need for altering life's conditions. Cases there are of the head of the family, one a man, the other a widowed mother, being made to feel they had come to be in the way of younger members, and leaving for juster conditions of life with a shrug of the shoulders. Or it was the well-ordered and worry-free conditions of life in the Sakyan Order that drew. Or, on the other hand, a predilection for simpler, austerer ways of life to be found there. Or unease at the uncertainty, the brevity, the menacing ills of life that showed it as something calling for revolt against acquiescence.

It is worth while noticing, that among those ills I have not found the ever-recurring ill of war driving man or woman into monastic quiet. The futility of war as a means of achieving lasting political stability finds expression in the Third Collection, but the sentiment appears as incidental, not as a point of credal importance. It is the conflict brought about in life by some deed of accident or design, and entailing woe or remorse that drives some men from social conditions. The citizen who has unwittingly married in his second wife a daughter of the first wife, the young brahmin who has ruined himself over a courtesan : here it is horror or contrition that drives to refuge in the Order.

But I find no other instances of remorse effecting the break-away. Much oftener it is bereavement. Not so much in loss of husband or wife. Only once in the monks' poems is the



## BEREAVEMENT

cause said, in the Commentary, to have been this, namely with one Hārīta. "Enjoying his lot with his wife, she was killed by snake-bite." In anguish he leaves the world.<sup>1</sup> Even then his little poem betrays nothing of this, showing only intentness in self-recreating will. Lament over a lost son by the father is in Buddhist scripture, but not in this anthology. It is the weeping mother we look for and find. There is here the little daughter :

O Ubbirī who walest in the wood,  
Crying 'O Jīvā ! O my daughter dear !'  
Come to thyself ! (Ver. 51.)

There is here the little son :

Now here, now there, lightheaded, crazed with grief,  
Mourning my son, I wandered up and down,  
Naked, unheeding, streaming hair unkempt. (Ver. 34.)

But in no case is it a husband that is expressly mourned for. I say not that this is typical, but in these poems at least, the lost husband is counted in only, where loss had been crushing in weight, and it is "woman's lot" that is woeful :

Returning home to give birth to my child,  
I saw my husband in the jungle die.  
My baby boys I lost, my husband too,  
And when in misery I reached my home,  
Lo ! where together on a scanty pyre  
My mother, father and my brother burn. (Ver. 218 f.)

We even find the prospect of *possible* bereavement for wife and mother, marriage itself, counted among the forms of desirable riddance. This is exemplified with much doctrinal and literary detail, in the last and longest of the women's poems.

<sup>1</sup> Translation, p. 29.

## WHY THESE CAME APART

Here we have left the briefer oral utterances, the probably original form of the greater part of the anthology. We are reading a written composition, a ballad-sermon reputed to be the work of a raja's daughter, who had grown up a pious 'church-woman', attending with her slaves the lectures given by local nuns in what then served as convent. A marriage with a worthy prince had been arranged for her, but Sumedhā protests in fluent sermons to parents and to suitor, and as, were she a Christian seeking to take the veil,

Let down the soft black masses of her hair  
And with a dagger cut them off,

and before her very respectful suitor "dropped them on the floor". Centuries after, Catherine of Siena appears to have acted like her, as the painting in her Sienese home shows. I have not compared their respective motives, nor are we told to what extent Sumedhā, thus emancipated from both happy home and happy prospects, developed intellectually and practically as did Catherine. But it is evident that for both these active and ambitious girls matrimony promised too little scope. Sumedhā does not so justify her refusal, but the prince, who was apparently a very decent fellow, may have judged from her eloquence, that her consent would have landed him with a pretty handful, and wisely pleads she may have her way and leave the world.

Another feature is the hardship of a peasant's lot as compared with the sheltered life of enrolled world-forsakers, and its restful leisure :

Well rid, well rid, O excellently rid,  
Am I from these three crooked tasks and tools,  
Rid o' my reaping with your sickles, rid  
Of trudging after ploughs, and rid's my back  
Of bending over wretched little spades. (Ver. 43.)



## EMANCIPATION

Poverty is equally burdensome to a man of the gipsy-beggar type, who also joins the Order, but his discarded world-garb proves a reminder of freedom from the Rule of those come apart, and tempt him to secede :

These were the rags of me, of 'Rags-and-Rice'.  
Too heavy is the gear I'm wearing now. (Ver. 160.)

We read also of political danger driving to the shelter of the Order. Mudita's clan becoming objectionable to the king he runs away :

I left the world that I might save my life,  
And once ordained I won back faith and hope. (Ver. 311.)

Or the refugee is a little boy exposed at night by 'the cruel uncle' in a charnel-field and rescued by the Sakyamuni himself :

Come then, Sopāka, fear thou not,  
Behold the Man-who-thus-hath-come.  
I, even I will bear thee o'er,  
As moon comes safe from Rahu's jaws,<sup>1</sup>

that is, from eclipse.

Other reasons may be noted, where the *vis à tergo* of the present, as undesirable, spurs to the new departure. In the case of the women-poets we see the spur of a new emancipation as evidently afoot at the birth of Buddhism. World-forsaking with them tends to take this shape in any case. The bereaved mother, the childless widow are emancipated from grief and contumely ; the Magdalen from remorse or from waning charm, the wife of raja or rich man from the satiety and emptiness of an idle life of luxury, the poor man's wife from care and drudgery, the young girl from the humiliation of being handed over to the suitor who bids highest. But there was,

<sup>1</sup> Verses in commentary only.

## WHY THESE CAME APART

in some cases, more than this. There is a suggestion here and there of a will to escape from a position of conventional inferiority as human being that we can discern. I suggest this appears in Somā's verses, found both in the anthology and in the Third Collection, but having in the latter more striking lines :

That vantage-ground the sages may attain  
Is hard to reach. With her two-finger wit  
That is no woman competent to gain. (p. 181.)

(This was supposed to be the comment of a sceptic, held by the monk-tradition to be an impersonation of an Indian Satan. Somā rejoins :)

What should the woman-nature do (to me)  
With mind well set and knowledge faring on,  
To me who rightly Dhamma can discern ?  
To him for whom the question may arise :  
Am I a woman in these matters, or  
Am I a man, or what not am I then—  
To such an one is Māra fit to talk.

The jibe 'two-finger wit' is explained as the pressing grains of rice from the pot between two fingers to gauge whether it is boiled. The daughter of a Neapolitan told me that the identical idiom is found in Italy : *Una mente lunga di due dita*. The verses aptly reveal a will in woman to be judged not as female :—the fancy, the servant, or even the mother of the male—but as *homo*, *purusha*, *ātma*, possessing, no less than the man, divine potency, intellectual promise, and width of outlook. Here is no mere restlessness within the home and the daily toil it might bring ; here there is felt-after that trinity which not France nor any nation can lightly brush aside : a Liberty which could bring an Equality within a new Fraternity.

It is noteworthy that the percentage of women's poems in

## THE HILLTOP

which Liberty—*mutti*, *vimutti*—is the theme is about one quarter : a much higher proportion than the corresponding rate in the men's poems. On the one hand there is the relief of the freed domestic slave : in *Muttā* (= Freed : the reader will note the names in this connection, suggesting, as they do, a later editorial 'christening' of lines by forgotten women) :

O free indeed ! O gloriously free

Am I in freedom from three crooked things :—

From quern, from mortar, from my crook-backed lord.

Then with the wider view :

Ay, but I'm free from rebirth and from death

And all that dragged me back is hurled away, (11)

showing herself a worthier 'man' than does the *Sumangala* I have quoted (p. 28).

Two others are said to have been of easier circumstances ; the victory for them lay over "the wildering gloom", usually a description of confused or muddled thinking (*moha*), and into a more interesting psychic and spiritual view respectively. Here both betake them to the hilltop :

Though I be suffering and weak, and all

My youthful spring be gone, yet have I come,

Leaning upon my staff, and clomb aloft

The mountain peak. My cloak thrown off,

My little bowl o'erturned. And o'er my spirit sweeps

The breath of Liberty ! By me is won

The Threefold Lore ! The Buddha-bidding's done ! (29 f.)

So *Mettikā*. The other hill-climber is *Chittā*.

Dear old sister-alpinists ! Have you since revisited earth to take up alpenstock, or maybe ice-axe and once more breathe the 'great air' aloft nearer to our lands ? We should have much in common, for with us too 'freedom' has spelt not

## WHY THESE CAME APART

only the crag and its joys, but the wider vision of life you were seeking centuries before us ; the ' right-of-way ' in the cultural and communal heritage you sought to share, and which we, without your world-forsaking exile, can both enjoy and work to enrich yet more.

It is not without interest, that in lines that suggest editorial supplement, such a woman is called ' freed-woman ' (*bhujissā*), a technical term for one who, once a slave, is with broken bonds, literally, ' cleaned '.

A cutting off, a putting away, or as I would say, riddance : into what seemed its opposite : liberty—such appears in most general terms to have been, if I may repeat the term, the *vis à tergo* that drove. The spirit of to-day has largely outgrown the idea, that the career of a recluse is the best way either to save one's self, or to help in mandating a New Word. In most cases perhaps the riddance was from Duty with a capital D, or from what was really opportunity of growth, had there been eyes to see it. It may be on the other hand, that only by turning the back on ' the world ' could the new leading in the movement be brought into sharp relief bearing new light to men. Who are we to condemn ?

## Chapter IV

### THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

There is a phrase very clearly worded in the poems and with equal frequency in the Commentary. This is that the farewell to life 'in the world' was undertaken "through (or in) faith : *saddhāya*". In other words, it was going to be worth while to make this great change. Thus one (v. 59) :

Strong in my faith I left the world.

And others :

Thou who through faith didst give up home and world,  
Become end-maker of its grief and pain. (v. 196.)

He who for faith's sake hath renounced the world  
And stands a novice in the Order new. (249-51.)

And when we heard that word our heart was glad,  
And faith rose up in us . . . (1254.)

And Mudita who, as we saw, entered for political reasons,  
sang

And once ordained I won back faith . . .

I have found it not a little strange how far Buddhists, born and 'verts, are from realizing the importance of 'faith' in their creed. I have even gone aside to make myself unpleasant in criticism of their opinion, that in Buddhism you found, not faith but 'knowledge' as the true object. Did they but study

## THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

the new gospel their religion originally was, they could not thus err. A gospel that takes as its central figure 'the Way' may rightly claim to be a quest after coming to know, but every such quest, if it be worth while, means forging ahead in faith, as does any true explorer. It is an adventure, an experiment, undertaken in the faith, that courage and sincerity in the seeker will find its reward. That lies, the old Sayings said, in the Beyond :

This is the Way for going to Beyond,  
And therefore is it Yonder-faring called.<sup>1</sup>

What lies beyond is yet unseen, is hoped for ; and " faith is the assurance (the '*hypostasis*') of the hoped for, the evidence of the not seen".<sup>2</sup> Let Buddhists look to these adventurers of old, who saw the "hand of faith" (*saddha-hattha*) in their Leader as a very trunk of elephant, probing, weighing (ver. 694-5).

I would next see in this world-leaving decision a confidence in particular, that the new life would be both better and happier. I do not say this to grant easy absolution to the shrinking from the life of duty in home, field and workshop. We are after all not dealing with normal undisturbed worldly careers. Nor, for that matter, with a normal settled religious outlook. But I am convinced that Indological writers tend to underestimate the great 'right-about-turn', in the acceptance of a religion of Immanence as contrasted with the older Vedic faith. The religious quest in face of death—and this included rebirth—was still a seeking in the Beyond. But man was being taught, that, as he fared he bore with him the very ark of the Holiest, no less than did the wandering sons of Jacob, nay, bore within him. Here was no more a concept of a Highest as without, afar, to be

<sup>1</sup> *Sutta-Nipāta*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Heb. xi, 1.*



propitiated by ritual and sacrifice. Here was a Highest within who could only be waited upon, aspired to by such ways of thought, word and deed as were reckoned desirable in life among men. The very man himself had been transformed into a Highest-in-potency. Hence when, in leaving world-life, with its much compromise with ways that were not most worth-while, and in entering on a life where such compromise was ruled out, he would be expecting to live on a higher moral scale than in the past.

Further, as we have seen, there would be, in the case of the earliest decades of ordination, the prospect of being nearer to the Leader of the New Order, and to his fellow-missioners, or, if it were a world-leaving of a later day, of learning from men or women who had shaped their lives by the new tradition. Not always is it the Old, the Traditional that draws ; and in the anthology I do not find it ever is just that. There will have been a new hope, a new spring in the air ; not the resigning one's self to 'doing without', much less to austerity of Lenten *tapas*. Not thus was the Better to be won. It was a work of "happiness leading to happiness". We read that the happy atmosphere in the Order drew public attention. As against a current teaching, especially in the hardly older Jain Order, there seems to have been among the Sakyans the saying that

This happiness by happy ways is won :

See the true rightness of the sense of Right ! (220, cf. 63.)

And we read of a striking tribute said to have been paid by the aged contemporary of the Founder, the king of Kōśālā, who finds the Sakyans "joyous and happy, exultant and jubilant, buoyant and fervent, without care or worry, tranquil, with mind as of creature of the wild. Surely, thought I, this is

## THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

due to you and your teaching". The Way is called "leading to rapture" (or joy : *pīti-gamanīya*), and members are bidden to "be joyful with much joy, for ye are they who have won to safety". This sense of new-found and lasting happiness reverberates through the Anthology :

Abundantly this almsman doth rejoice,  
Over the things by the Awake made known.  
For he doth fare along the ways of peace,  
The bliss of quiet as to this and that. (2)

E'en as the high-bred steer with crested back  
Lightly the plough adown the furrow turns,  
So lightly glide for me the nights and days  
Now that this pure untainted bliss is won. (16.)

A young monk, a cripple, sings :

But what 'twas meet to do, that have I done,  
And what is verily delectable,  
Therein is my delight : thus happily  
Has happiness been sought after and won. (63.)

Crookback-Sobhita testifies :

Good fight he made and made good sacrifice,  
And in the battle won :—now by such war,  
The fervent following of the godly life,  
In happiness he resteth evermore. (236.)

Angulimāla also, the one-time dreaded bandit :

Deep in the wild beneath some forest tree,  
Or in the mountain cave, is't here, is't there,  
So have I stood and let my throbbing heart  
Transported beat. Happy I go to rest  
And pass the day, happy I lead my life.  
Escaped from snare of evil ah ! behold  
The Master's sweet compassion shown to me.<sup>1</sup> (887 f.)

---

<sup>1</sup> *Further Dialogues*, Sutta 89.



## H A P P I N E S S

Bhaddiya, recruited from a Sakyan estate, explains his tendency to be ever breathing forth 'Ah what happiness !' by contrasting his fears, mistrust, unquiet as a landowning raja with the peace of having given it all up :

Today a happy winner see,  
At ease, all fear and fright removed . . .

'Great' Kassāpa reminds, that such happiness is the result of selection from the full tale of life :

Who greedy seeks to taste life's feast entire,  
Neglects the good that brings true happiness.

The women-poets are scarcely less certain in their new-found happiness. They find themselves in joyous company : so Pajāpati's verse, aunt and fostermother of the Founder :

Behold the company who learn of him—  
In happy concord of fraternity,  
Of strenuous energy and resolute,  
From strength to strength advancing toward the goal.

But the happiness is no mere mass-complex : here speaks Vijāyā :

While passed the last watch of the night, I sat  
And rent aside the gloom of ignorance.  
Then, letting joy and blissful ease of mind  
Suffuse my body, seven days I sat . . .

And here is another masterful lady, Chālā :

. . . hath made her way  
Where lies the path of peace, where dwells the bliss  
Of mastery over action, speech and thought.

Tradition credits one here and there with "vibrating with

## THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

unceasing joy at the Buddha" (*Pss. of the Sisters*, p. 149). And our lady of the many words, Sumedhā, insists that

Above, beyond Nirvana's bliss is naught.  
And they have won that bliss who all their hearts  
Have plighted to the blessed word of him  
Who hath the tenfold power, and heeding naught,  
Have striven to put far from them birth and death. (476-7.)

The paean of joy may be said to culminate in the verses of one of the genuine poets of the Collection, Bhūta, "declaring his love for and happiness in the monachistic life", his nine verses being even in a limping translation, a joy to read (518-26).

Closely in tune with his poem is, shall I say? a pagan channel of joy, which it is hard to find anticipated in any ancient literature. I refer to what we know as a sense of the beauty in 'nature'. Years ago the late Havelock Ellis wrote complacently, that the earliest instance of this was to be found in certain letters from the desert by St. Jerome. I hastened to put the case for the Buddhist anthology—in the *Quest*, I think it was. Beside this St. Jerome has no case for priority at all, and Dr. Winternitz has testified to a similar trait in other branches of Indian literature. Monks and nuns though they were, our poets find nothing in the beauty of this and that in woodland or hill life that is reprehensible. Nor does the Commentator, who simply remarks: "it was to show the charm of the forest that he replied thus and thus . . . they loved the woods", and so on. A possible shade of apology appears in his words on Sabbākā, whose little poem is the most frankly pagan of any. The verses, it is said, were his confession of gnosis (*aññā*), because he showed therein his delight in 'empty places', "this term being in a formula ascribed to the Founder, wherein he often enjoins: 'Now

## NATURE

have I made this clear to you. Here, monks, are roots of trees ; here are empty places. Be watchful (*jhāyatha*) ; be earnest lest hereafter ye regret.' " Sabbākā is frankly preferring the recluse life to that of the alms-supported cenobite, and speaks only of the charm for him of his retreat as a 'pièce d'occasion'. But herein his preoccupation is so exceptional, that I quote his verses without apology.

Whene'er I see the crane, her clear bright wings  
Outstretched in fear to flee the black stormcloud,  
A shelter seeking, to safe shelter borne,  
Then doth the river Ajakaraṇī  
Give joy to me.

Whene'er I see the crane, her plumage pale  
And silver white outstretched in fear to flee  
The black stormcloud, seeing no refuge nigh,  
The refuge seeking of the rocky cave,  
Then doth . . .

Who doth not love to see on either bank  
Clustered rose-apple trees in fair array  
Behind the great cave of my hermitage,  
Or hear the soft croak of the frogs, well rid  
Of their undying mortal foes proclaim  
'Not from the mountain-stream is't time today  
To flit. Safe is the Ajakaraṇī.  
She brings us luck. Here is it good to be.'

Not less a joyous echo has been the ké-ká call of the peacock in other poems :

Peacocks of sapphire neck and comely crest  
Calling, calling in Karanviya woods :  
By cool and humid winds made musical :  
They wake the thinker from his noonday sleep.

## THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

And this more strenuous picture :

The lightnings flash e'en in the rocky cave  
Smiting Vebhāra's crest and Pandava,  
And in the mountain-bosom hid, a child  
Of the incomparable Master sits  
Ardent, alert (*jhāyati*). (41.)

But for the keener souls, as we saw with those elderly nuns, it was chiefly the heights that lured : "the fells dominating the meads of Magadha above Rājgir, or the foothills of Northern Kosāla (Nepal and Sikkim), beyond which towered the snowy ramparts of mysterious Himavā :

These are the crags that give me joy.

Such retreats were called 'clean and pure', 'a hiding place from the many-folk',

Lone heights where saintly Rishis oft resort,

and were the haunts of austere climbers like great-Kassapa, who, in ten couplets of his long poem-cluster, confesses to his preference. Nor is he in any pagan way content therein. *Alam me!* 'Enough for me!' he repeats in four vigorous lines, who fain would seek the Aim, brooding rapt and tense, fain to win union, with spirit braced (1062-71).

Equally happy in the wild, and more catholic in choice of retreats is the beautiful poem of Tālapuṭa, an actor-poet of a name unknown outside the anthology. His fifty-five couplets are the only unitary work of this length.

Like creature of the wild roaming at large,  
In the fair flowering jungle, so thou too  
Hast gone up on the lovely cloud-wreathed crest.  
There on the mountain where no crowd can come  
Shalt find thy joy, O heart, for never doubt  
That thou shalt surely win to the beyond.

## N A T U R E

Not less catholic is Ekavihāriya<sup>1</sup> 'forest-sense,'<sup>2</sup> in his less lengthy poem, to which on the whole I would award first prize. It is the work of a nature-lover, yet is it never pagan :

If there be none in front nor none behind  
Be found, is one alone and in the woods,  
Exceeding pleasant doth his life become.  
Come then ! alone I'll get me hence and go  
To lead the forest life the Buddha praised,  
And taste the welfare known to the recluse,  
Who dwells alone with concentrated mind.  
Yea, swiftly and alone, bound to my quest  
I'll to the jungle that I love, the haunt  
Of wanton elephants, the source and means  
Of thrilling zest to each ascetic soul.  
In Cool Wood's flowery glades cool waters lie,  
Within the hollows of the hills ; and there  
I'll bathe my limbs when hot and tired, and there  
At large in ample solitude I'll roam.

Lone and unmated in the lovely woods,  
When shall I come to rest, work wrought, heart cleansed ?  
O that I might win through who am so fain !  
I only may achieve the task ; herein  
None for his fellowman can aught avail.

I'll bind my spirit's armour on, and so  
The jungle will I enter, that from thence  
I'll not come forth till every canker's waned.  
I'll seat me on the mountain top, the while  
The wind blows cool and fragrant on my brow,  
And burst the baffling mists of ignorance.  
Then on the flower-carpet of the wood,  
Anon in the cool cavern of the cliff,  
Blest in the bliss of liberty I'll take  
Mine ease on thee, old Fastness of the Crag.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lone-dweller, said to have been Tissa, brother to King Asoka.

<sup>2</sup> Cf Usābha, 110.

## THE PROSPECT HELD OUT

Lo ! I am he whose purpose is fulfilled.  
And rounded as the moon on fifteenth day.  
Destroyed all deadly canker, sane, immune,  
I know rebirth comes ne'er again for me.

Of these woodland lovers one, legend tells, was born untimely in the forest, his mother being taken with travail while walking in the woods she had yearned to see. This is perhaps a pathetic clue to the silence as to nature-love in the nuns' poems—if we except our two old hill-women, we find no corresponding expression of the effect of nature on the women-poets. Nor is this to be wondered at. Even when clad as were monks, they could not, it would seem, walk alone without the risk of being accosted, if attractive, by undesirable males. Man could afford so much better to range "alone like the rhinoceros", as runs the Sutta-Nipāta refrain. And, as I have said, we can only guess that the sense of the great Mother's touch was on them too sometimes by a brief line here and there, like the halting notes of a bird-songster cage-confined. Was it really the nun Subhā who composed such lines as :

Sweet overhead is the sough of the blossoming crests of the forest  
Swayed by the wind-gods ?

Had she too felt how that sough could sweep over her, cleansing from sense of frustration and staleness, as some of us know ? Probably life in the Order, if she was still young, did not here give her much new scope. Tradition had witholden her eyes ; she did not maybe ask to see. The nature-lovers I have quoted from were sons of brahmins and nobles, and hence were as we say educated, men of culture. They could afford to find a dear dalliance in the charm of the wild. The woman, however well born, had first to strive after the new attainment of spiritual and intellectual equality with the man-in-Orders. She could not afford to pause and listen to the ancient Mother.



And even those of a later date who have so listened know, that as growth goes on in things very worth while, that venerable Dame's voice tends to lose its constraining power.

Miss Horner, in her thoughtful study of 'Almswomen', or Buddhist nuns, is of opinion, that the apparent insensibility to nature was "because in meditation they concentrated more intensely than men, and shut away all distracting sights and sounds by effort of will, determined to sunder the bonds that dragged them backward to the hither shore".<sup>1</sup> This is possibly true, and we both must leave it at that. A parallel and greater thoroughness might be cited in modern new developments in woman's life. I would not go so far as to say, that evidence of will-concentration, in these poems of monks, could not be paralleled as of equal strenuousness. It is rather in the left-out, in the what we can not afford to stop over and dally with, that the truth in her contention lies.

A note may be here in place as to distraction in retreat in the wild through danger from the wild beast. We associate Indian jungles with tigers, not to say panthers and wild elephants; I have referred to lions. What of these?

Well, the lion, called in Pali often 'king of the beasts', was, I judge, possibly as extinct as he was for Europe thus acclaiming him. The tiger (*vyaggha*) barely comes into oldest Pali literature at all, if I err not!<sup>2</sup> One only of the nuns' poems touches on danger from elephants:

Haunted is the great forest with many a herd of wild creatures,  
Broken its peace by the trappings of elephants, rutting and savage. (373.)  
Hostile aborigines never find mention here. The one living distraction is the mordant insect, unless we include heat and cold. In the Commentary it is the wild beasts that show fear—at the tempest. Snakes play a very small part.

<sup>1</sup> *Women in Primitive Buddhism.*

<sup>2</sup> *Gradual Sayings*, iii, 81.

## Chapter V

### OWING TO THE SELF

To Pārāpariya, monk, seated alone,  
Detached and musing, thoughts like these arose :

What is there of course or order,  
What is there in rite or conduct,  
Which may make a man accomplish  
That which to himself is owing,  
Nor work harm on any other ?

So begins a poem of twenty couplets, the compiler of which betrays no afflation to write beautifully, but intense care rather to state clearly and soberly matters the truth of which he is convinced. What does he conclude is 'owing to himself' (*attano kiccakāri'ssa*) ?

He surveys the divers ways in which, by seeming to serve the self, he ministers only to bodily longings and the recipient mind, and judges that

Sorrow thereby will pursue him,  
and that the best way to eliminate the many methods

Whereby man his fellows cheateth,  
Smiting, slaying, sore afflicting,

is to proceed

As a strong man plying woodcraft  
Useth nail to smite a nail out,  
So the wise and virtuous brethren  
Use one power to smite out others :

## PĀRĀPARIYA

Faith and effort, concentration,  
Mindfulness and wisdom plying,  
Five by other five outsmiting,

namely, casting out the fivefold power of sense by these five.  
In other and finer terms—and this is his real climax—

Work that with the Aim is bound up,  
Love that's set upon the Ideal :—  
Let him with that work go forward,  
Yea, 't is here a love surpassing.

Pārāpariya, the brahmin convert to 'Sakya', is here showing himself as the true type of those who joined the Order. This was, in at least the first century of its existence, an unconventional step to take, and as such, save in cases of child-entrants, or of passive drifting, was definitely the outcome of the personal will to escape from a worse, to gain a better. To many that better might seem to merge personal welfare in the bolstering of this by a communal wellbeing. Thus 'great' Pajāpati might bid us

Behold the company who learn of him  
In happy concord of fraternity,  
Of strenuous energy and resolute,  
From strength to strength advancing toward the Aim, (161)

she who had, we may gather, willed in joining, not so much to benefit herself, as to bring purpose and order into the lives of a number of idle ladies. But in far the majority of cases the step is recorded as having been taken to make less evil, to make better, the individual destiny, as 'owing to the self'. To this degree then, as speaking for the more generally felt quest in entrants, Pārāpariya earns the place of a true poet of the Order.

And his way of wording that quest as personal is distinctive. It is not in accordance with the wording that Buddhists in their scripture mainly adopted. Distinctive in his referring to prospects in entering the Order as a claim, made by heart or mind or ideas about the needs of the self. It herein resembles the claim made by a man of the world of art as was the poet Tālapuṭa. It is more in keeping with the outlook which was for me that of original Buddhism. In this, the self, that is, the spirit, very man, so far from being unreal, was a very real More than either body or mind.

This, as I have elsewhere reiterated, is borne out by certain passages which are not in keeping with their main teaching, and which have hence been passed over. Thus the Founder is recorded as saying : *You* make the self no more than body or mind ; herein you are as men who would see, in king (i.e. judge), one in no way different from the subjects of whose property and lives he disposes. Again, the self is neither body nor mind, else (the self being then held as intrinsically divine) either of these could will to be other and better than it is. Again : The self is one of the three dominant influences, the other two being Dhamma and good men of this world and the next.

Now these are as early as anything Buddhism has to show. And, with a few exceptions, this is the teaching we find in Pārāpariya and the poems in general. Let us look into both (1) teaching and (2) exceptions.

(1) Take these lines ascribed to a fellow-worker of the Founder : ' great ' Kaccāna, also a brahmin :

Not evil are the actions of a man  
Because of what another saith or doth ;  
'Tis by the self he must from wrong abstain ;  
Of their own acts the offspring mortals be.

## THE MORE IN MAN

And as we know our very self to be,  
E'en this in us do devas know.

Here indeed is an ever present arbiter—a 'king-judge'—in each of us, and if, as another poet put it, we "grasp the mirror of the Ideal", that is, Dharma :—the More that is potential in each ;

The knowing and the seeing what we are :  
So I reflected on this groupèd frame  
Within and eke without, then I beheld  
How, whether it was very self or not,  
The body empty is . . .

Both *kāya*, here rendered 'frame', and *ātmā* or *attā* were at times used to include the whole personality, as readers of the Upanishads know. But when the thinker analyses, he leaves us in no doubt, that, so far from wiping out the reality of the "I", it is for him this "I" who is "reflecting", and contemplating the groupèd frame, and striving for insight. It is not a confounding the factors of the 'frame' that he arrives at ; it is a vision of the More that he is than this which emerges.

I am not saying that he is at pains to show this—why should he be ? For most of these poets that sinister confounding which rears its head in the Suttas had not yet come to the front. Indeed, he would seem, here and there, as inclined, no less than was his Leader, to make a point of using the word "I" (*aḥam*)—a usage which ever implies emphasis, as in our tongue it does not. English readers naturally overlook this, for we translators forget it too, and fail to italicize the "I" when it is used with the verb. Take for instance Tālapuṭa's poem : in six of the first couplets (and again in later lines) it would not occur to most of us that his use of '*ham*', meant more than,

# OWING TO THE SELF

in the phrase *kadā nu 'ham*, just "O when (shall) I . . ." and not, as the Pali requires,

When shall I come to dwell in mountain caves,  
Now here, now there, unmated with desire,  
And with the vision gained  
Into impermanence  
Of all that doth 'become, yea, this for *me*,  
E'en this, when shall it come to be?

Can we not hear the personal realization longed for in these lines?

As to that, you may say, it was metre that drove him. Nor do I wish overmuch to stress the point. Yet I do not see him as an able poet thus driven. For let us turn to his second part. He is addressing his 'heart', more literally 'mind' (*chitta*): It is not so much an *alter ego* he is chiding, as an inefficient instrument of the self or very man:

Have I not, O my heart, when asked by thee . . .

Well then, O heart, art thou not pleased with me?

For thee, O heart, things are not as of yore.  
'Twill not suffice that I within thy power  
Fall back to live once more.

Since I've the goal so firm, so sure, O heart,  
What wilt thou do to make me turn?  
No more be't mine, my heart, to follow thee.

We may call this a duologue between a lesser and a greater ego, but it is misfitting so to speak. There are not two Tālapuṭas, much less is there no Tālapuṭa. We see the one man haranguing his errant instrument, and imputing to it his own back-chat to himself.



With the nuns it is not to be expected that we should find no preoccupation with the ‘ me ’ as other than the *rūpa*—a word meaning both shape and beauty—since in comeliness lay for most girls so important an asset determining her earthly fate. For all that, the distinction between the two is in wording less emphatic than we might have expected. There is, it is true, no lack of ‘ *aham* ’. In ‘ great ’ Pajapati’s verses it may have been genuine emphasis she intended, and not merely the metric bisyllable. She says :

’Tis long that *I* have wandered down all time,  
Living as mother, father, brother, son,  
And as grandparent in the ages past,  
Not knowing how and what things really are.

Namely, that these human relations were not the real ‘ she,’ but so many ‘ encasements ’ as Oliver Lodge might have said, of that *homo* she indeed was. Mittakālī’s repeated *aham*’s (92-3) on the other hand are merely metrical, as is Anopamā’s (151). The famous courtesan Ambapālī mercilessly cons over her wasted charms, but with no emphasis on herself “ as other ”, a distinction used in the poems. Another, Addha-Kāī however, in repeating the emphatic *aham* twice in one line, *may* have done so to mark the More she came to see she was. A more literal translation than I gave of line 26 is

Then did *I* weary of my beauty,  
Wearying ’twas *I* did feel distaste.

But neither with her would I stress the point. More noteworthy perhaps is the interest apparently aroused in two nuns by the senior Sister teaching them what amounts to lessons in psychology :

Dhamma she taught to me, wherein I learnt  
The aggregates, sense-spheres and elements.

## OWING TO THE SELF

Here is indeed a plurality, very different from the topic of "what I really am", but it was just part and parcel of the vogue of mental analysis, started before their day by one Kapīla, and which, together with seeing causal uniformities in mind-procedure, constituted the new science of their day. And it is of no little interest that we get this new psychological compound twice in the nuns' poems, but not at all in the monks'. That the two little women, Uttamā and another, whose name is lost, were possibly more impressed by the formidable compound than guided by it is suggested by the fact, that in the context both are shown cultivating with success psychic, not psychological training. To this I shall recur (Ch. IX).

Neither anyway is careful to reassure herself, as are some of the monks, that the analysis is, as it was called, a 'computing' (*sankhāna*) of instruments and conditions only, and did not break up or do away with the self that analysed and computed. Let us now glance at the exceptional cases I referred to.

(2) We need to be careful—more careful than the modern Buddhist—not to see the denial of soul or spirit in such lines as those of Moggallāna, (1160-1), a leading first missionary :

They penetrate the delicate things of truth,  
As arrowpoint doth pierce a tip of hair,  
Who the five aggregates of mind and body see  
As something 'other', and as not the self.

Here he is shown echoing the record of the very first warning of his leader, namely, not to see in either body or mind, mere instruments, the man or soul, user of these. In that warning we are still seeing the original outlook, that of Immanence, in which the man or soul is potentially Deity, handicapped by having to use mortal instruments. There is no repudiation here of the reality of the user of body and mind any more than

'I' RULED OUT

there is of these as real. It is the mistaken, the crooked vision alone that is blamed.

And Moggallāna is echoed by at least two nuns :

Act, speech and thought I saw as other,  
(Not my self) . . . (101.)

Ponder how what ye do and say and think  
Proceeds from what is 'other', not the self. (177.)

It is when we come upon three verses in a poem ascribed to Añña-Kondañña, said to have been an old brahman of the first to join Gotama's mission, and first to grasp what he in his New Word meant, that we see already started the definite negation of the very man's reality. These are three couplets from the Dhammapada, an anthology containing what is evidently an accretion of segments, earlier and later, as well as sub-accretions within each segment. The three couplets form an appendix to one of the four sections of the composite poem. In this section the 'elder' is said to be stirred by the power over men of wrong ideas. Then follows what may have been, as quotation, inserted : three verses, amounting, in their stereotyped form, almost to a formula :

When he by wisdom doth discern and see :  
Impermanent are all component things  
Then he at all this suffering feels disgust.  
Lo ! herein lies the way to purity.

The second and third verses are similar, but substitute that all component things are "suffering" (or 'ills') and that they are "not-self" (*an-attā*).

He then, quitting the stilted formula-style, breaks out into a joyous confession of what the 'life sublime' (or 'training' :

## OWING TO THE SELF

*brahma-chariya*) has meant for him—an intensely personal note :

Brother Kondañña, awakened by the Wake :  
Lo ! he hath passed with vigour out and on ;  
Sloughed off hath he the dyings and the births,  
Wholly accomplishing the life sublime,  
And be it 'flood' or 'snare' or 'stumblingblock',  
Or be it 'mountain' hard to rive in twain,  
The 'net', the 'stumblingstone' I've hacked away,  
And cloven is the rock so hard to break,  
And crossed the 'flood'. Rapt in ecstatic thought  
He dwells from bondage unto evil freed.

Now were I to say, it were not easy to find lines so plainly vindicating the reality of the strong-willed self-directing 'soul' as do these ten, I might be met with the reply : In these the poet reverts to the diction of the visible tangible man-of-earth, such as is conventionally referred to by the 'I', the 'he' of conventional speech. But in the formula he has shown what vision, penetrating beneath man's desires, purposes and worldly undertakings, pronounces. And that is, that ultimately, in very truth, there is no 'being' who desires, purposes and achieves. Or if there be one, we here and now cannot 'get at' him.

In other words, to speak, as we should say, philosophically or metaphysically, if "all" (*sabbam*) is "not-spirit", then must we, to find or posit a spirit, limit the meaning of "all", all things, to exclude a possible universe *where* (to borrow terms of space) spirit does exist or has reality. Spirit, that is 'man', is thereby banished from all activities undertaken, carried on in the world as we know it. Virtually this is that utter denial of man's spiritual reality which, for some curious reason, Buddhists have come to hold fast to, as the 'central teaching' of their creed.

This distinction, if there be any, beyond a more and a less

guarded wording, between man's utter unreality and our not being able, as yet, to 'get at' his reality, does show itself markedly in the uniquely curious set of debates, said to have been held at the Council at Patna, the new metropolis of Buddhism, in Asoka's reign. It is much more dogmatically defined in the (later) Commentary on the debates. Here the term "ultimate (or supreme) meaning" is opposed to "conventional meaning", the latter being called the outlook of the unlearned, the man in the street, the former as that taught only to advanced learners. But in the anthology I find no proof whatever, that this clear-cut distinction had emerged. And this fact, together with the peculiar ascription and position of those formula-lines in this venerable pioneer's poem, incline me to hold, we have here the work of the later editor, who, by the way, is often confessed to in the anthology. For instance, after Ānanda's poem: "These were added by the Council . . ." namely a doxology to him.

It is indeed hard to see the vigorous lines quoted above of the old disciple, striding on,

. . . like warrior elephant  
In van of battle, mindful, vigilant,

as a mere complex of mental phenomena, even though with him we don't get the emphatic '*aham*': 'I', so doughty is the self-direction in the tribute he pays to himself. One emphatic pronoun is there: the 'he' in the last line. This is *so*, akin to the Latin *se*, *suus*, and it should ever be read as italicized. I know it makes metrically a handy particle and I do not therefore see it as at all evidential. The verses with their outpoured vigour of a man-of-will, a man-of-persistent energy, are for me a forcible contradiction that old Aññā-Kondañña would for a moment have used the preceding

formula. But, whenever this, the so-called 'three marks' formula was made articulate, it became of outstanding importance, and need was felt to insert it, both in the leading anthology, *Dhammapada*, and also as connected with this, the first disciple. As uttered by him the formula would more strongly win credit when it was new.

To conclude: there is a little poem by a long-forgotten Sister, to whom the appropriate soubriquet of Dantikā: 'tamed woman', has been given:

Coming from noonday rest on Vulture's Peak,  
I saw an elephant his bathe performed,  
Forth from the river issue. And a man,  
Taking his goad, bade the great creature stretch  
His foot: 'Give me thy foot!' The elephant  
Obeyed and to his neck the driver sprang.  
I saw the untamed, tamed, I saw him bent  
To master's will; and marking inwardly,  
I passed into the forest depths and there  
I faith I trained and ordered all my heart. (48-50.)

A charming sketch of severe word-economy. Dantikā's Pali has no 'I's as against my British five. But none the less how clear it is that, for her, driver and elephant are a picture of the very self of her and her will, heart or mind:—master and servant. Is it not strangely irrational to turn to orthodox institutional Buddhism's denial of the driver, and that only the elephant here is real?

Yet one more little poem, enigmatic perhaps to us, but not to the Buddhist. Valliya, an educated brahmin youth, "reflecting on the past with its worldly objects and desires", sings thus:

An ape within the little five-doored hut  
Doth prow, and round and round from door to door  
He hies, rattling with blows again, again,



## APE AND KEEPER

Halt, ape ! run thou not forth ! for thee  
'Tis not herein as it was wont to be.  
Wisdom doth hold thee captive. Never more  
Shalt roam far hence (in freedom as of yore).

For the Suttas the ape is the type of man's restless inquisitive *chitta*, mind or heart. But here we have both ape and ape's keeper and master. Are we going to sanction the Buddhist's seeing the ape alone as real, but not its keeper ?

## Chapter VI

### THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

I have so far considered mainly the case of such poets in the Buddhist Order as were rather driven by upsetting circumstances or by unfavourable conditions to leave the world, than drawn thereto by a more deeply based decision. Yet we shall not account for the membership of all our authors if we omit this latter motive. In other words, I want to deal with the minority whom we find bent on the quest of an ideal or goal, not of this little span of life only, but one that involved an outlook upon life as a whole, men and women who as our own poet has it, "saw life steadily and saw it whole"—how those men and women would have appreciated Arnold's line !

In my translations of their twin anthology I sought to analyse in tables their motives, so far as these might be called chosen and not thrust upon them. These tables are not now for me, after these many years, the quite desirable shop windows they seemed to be. I might be inclined to simplify them under fewer heads, at least for the more elect minority. One term for the great quest that obsessed the few I duly mentioned, but did not treat it historically. Pupil of older writers on Buddhism, I did not then inquire adequately into (a) the religious tradition of the more thoughtful of India's children, (b) the extent to which that tradition was becoming, or had been becoming leavened by a change in religious values. In it one term is, in my translations, called Ambrosia. Philologically correct, for *ā-māṭṭā* : 'immortal', this Greek rendering

## GOAL TERMS

is misleading. For us 'ambrosia' is weak and misty. In its Indian form it was anything but that for the birth-era of Buddhism. *Amata*, in Sanskrit *amṛta*, was then still the uttermost desirable, however otherwise this might also be conceived. In the teaching of Immanence which pushed back the older Vedic concepts, and on which the well-born youth of North India was brought up, it was less a attribute of an ultimate Goal attained than a name for Deity Itself. We cannot read the Upanishad sayings without seeing this. "Brahma the immortal, the fearless" . . . "the self (or spirit), the immortal is Brahma", and so on. To this due heed has been given; but *not duly to this*, that when Gotama of the Sakyans announces his resolve to teach, he is made to call this a "beating the drum<sup>1</sup> of the immortal". And he is also shown saying "Wide opened are the gates of the immortal".

We are here not up against a poetically fanciful term for the ultimate Goal. We have in view the very Goal itself. The older Vedic idea was that a man could win personal immortality by a piously celebrated ritual function, or, if deceased, by his son. In the Vedas immortality is prayed for. I am not so far belittling the singers as to see them ranking themselves as merely mortal and praying for new nature, new potency to supervene in the man-of-earth. It is much more prayer for unfolding about him, after death, of new conditions in which he can blossom out as a son of the immortal. Does any reader know the eloquent lines to the sacred juice Soma—divine milkpunch, as Bloomfield with quaint scurrility calls it—in Rig Veda IX, where Soma is called the Pavamāna, the Winnowing One, or Purifying Motor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An idiom for proclaiming.

<sup>2</sup> Rig Veda IX. The translation is Griffith's.

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

O Pavamāna, place me in that deathless undecaying world  
Wherein the light of heaven is set and everlasting lustre shines !  
Make me immortal in that realm . . . where is heav'n's secret shrine,  
where are those waters young and fresh !  
Make me immortal where men move e'en as they list,  
in inmost heav'n's third sphere, where lucid worlds hold light !  
Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire !  
Make me immortal in that realm where happiness and bliss,  
Joy and felicity combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled !

Here is no mere realm of added conditions of rest and peace,  
heaven of the old and weary ; here is the ever-surging life of  
eternal adolescence, the winning, the ever-creating the New !  
We, with riper knowledge, that language is fitted almost exclu-  
sively for the needs and concepts of life in the actual and present,  
fitted for at best life in a More, think, and think rightly that the  
Most is ineffable, and that we can only rightly name that which  
we know. As to that the Buddhist poet thought so long ago :

There is no measuring a man gone hence ;  
that whereby we word him, that for him is not ;  
In matters that to end are brought, the ways  
to tell to end are brought, yea, every one.<sup>1</sup>

The youthful courage of the Veda hymn is not so reticent,  
yet this vision of fervent aspiration surely appeals to us as does  
no tombstone vista of rest and peace.

In one respect the lovely lines are for me defective. The  
man who can will and yearn for immortality is, I repeat, in  
very being already immortal. It is the conditions wherein that  
immortal potency can be experienced which alone are wanting.  
Here and now he has about him the mortal. Actually he is  
praying for a becoming, wherein and whereby he may be rid  
for ever of any mere mortal appanage, of his mortal instruments  
necessary to him for life in this or that world, that is, a body

<sup>1</sup> Sutta-Nipāta, ver. 1076.

and mind-ways of using body. The early Upanishads, though they reveal a great religious advance, still contain such a prayer as

May I, O *Deva*, become bearer of the Immortal !<sup>1</sup>

A deeper vision might have prayed, not for *amṛta*, but for *ārogyā* : that is, for the being perfectly *well*. For a man who is in consummate spiritual health, immortality is an integral quality. Such an one has no further need of instruments that can wear out, needful though these may be for his long apprenticeship, his long wayfaring in the worlds.

In leaving the Pavamāna prayer I would point out that it is not typical of Vedic aspiration. I have found less than a dozen contexts in the Hymns on 'immortal' and 'immortality' (*amṛtattva*). Nor is there a greater number in what is held to be the intervening literature of the Brāhmaṇas. But in the relatively short compass of the 13 Upanishads reckoned earliest, these two words occur about 100 times. For them *amṛta* is a keyword. Man's right aspiration is declared to be towards a state of the worthy in other worlds, that of the 'deva' or relatively advanced not-of-earth humans, for whom, unlike the more developed psychical horizon of early Buddhism, there is no more illness, old age or death. And since death was the most serious of the three, the word representing all three absences was "the deathless", the imperishable : *amṛta*, *akṣhara*. *Amṛta* was thus a term much in the thoughts, on the lips of teachers in the years preceding and accompanying the birth of Buddhism. And if we note, that in spite of the departure in later tradition, the new missionary, setting out to teach a new gospel, had on his lips this important religious term of the current teaching, using it as a name for his gospel, it would seem to be reasonable to hold that for him too it was a term of highest significance.

<sup>1</sup> *Taittirīya*, i, 4, 1.

It was not so for the later tradition of his teaching. A new idea of man's final goal was even then creeping up, and the term for that : *nirvana*, gradually both worsened and absorbed into itself *amata*. It is none the less interesting to see how the editing, which has inserted this other term here and there in the account of the Founder's early career, has *left in* the older word which will have been of these two, the only deeply important one when he began. It is only the Commentary which thrusts in the newer terms. Thus, commenting on the saying "opened are the gates of the Immortal", we are told : "these gates are the Ariyan Way ; that verily is the gate of *nirvana* reckoned as *amata*."

This is interesting since it joins, in order to explain, an older term, a word then, though not new, lifted into great prominence : "Way", to a word which had not yet come in : *nirvana*. To *nirvana* I shall return. By this—as I judge—reluctance to supplant the older venerable term *amata*, its older significance having no lure for monastic Buddhism, we are, at this distance of time, able to see—and see not by this only—how the Founder set out in harmony with the outlook of the current Immanence, and with this keynote therein.

In this older meaning we can see in our anthology-literature how *amata* was still an outlook and aspiration of the kind I have indicated : a desirable perspective of life seen steadily and whole. It both occupied the thoughts and directed the will of the earnest seeker after what *we* might call salvation. And were a teacher to put it in the forefront of his teaching, it might well bring him such disciples. Thus Nigrodha says :

No fear have I for fearsome things, for he  
The Master learned as to the Immortal, is  
The Way where fear no-wise a footing finds,  
And by that Way the world-forsakers fare. (21.)



## WAY AND THE IMMORTAL

Here we have in noteworthy conjunction both the keynote of current lore and that newer (not new) word which he made so emphatic : life *as a wayfaring*. Valliya too, in whom one sees poetic power :

All that by earnest work has to be done,  
All that one fain to wake to truth must do,  
All that shall be my work, nor shall I fail.  
O see my forward strides in energy !  
And do *thou* show me how and where to go—  
The Road that's plunged deep in Amata—  
So I in silent study pondering,  
Shall to the silence of the seers attain,  
As glides great Gangā's river to the main. (167-8.)

Then among later poets we have Telakāni's interesting self-revelation of 20 couplets, who confesses he had long been seeking in vain answer to his question : " Who is he in the world who has got beyond (*pāram*) ? " adding

Who hath in Amata a foothold won ?

Then Tālapuṭa, on whose sincerity I would cast no slight, certainly finds the phrase fits his muse : Thus :

O when shall I, hearing the call adown the woods  
Of crested peacock twice-born as I lie  
At rest within the bosom of the hill,  
Arise and summon thought and will  
To win to Amata—  
Yea, when shall this come to be ?

This life is all a-quake ! So I beheld,  
Renounced the world and chose th' Immortal Path.

Make to become within thy life the Way  
For winning Amata,  
The way of progress and egress,  
Founded upon the waning of all Ill. (1103, 1110, 1115.)

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

Finally a man with real poetic gift, the improvisor Vangīsa :

For he hath shown a Way by many methods  
For crossing o'er the fearsome fourfold flood ;  
And we to whom he hath declared th' Immortal,  
Stand seers of Dhamma inexpugnable. (1243.)<sup>1</sup>

The Commentary—and this in a document that is said to have taken its present Pali form as late as the fifth century A.D. is not a little remarkable—goes in its own way as far to establish Amata as a quest of the whole religious life as do the poems. Not only does it tell, as the verses do not, of Ajjuna and Uttiya “leaving the world in the quest of Amata”, but it does what, in his composite poem of 40 couplets, the great disciple Sāriputta is not recorded as doing, it repeats the Vinaya story that both he and his fellow-pupil Moggallāna, young brahmins both, were seeking Amata, and had agreed “each to tell the other if he first arrived at” a better teaching about it.

I turn to the nuns. These use mostly the rival and supplanting term Nirvana. But with notable exceptions. Here are words ascribed to one of the few poetesses among the singers, Kisā-Gotamī :

Lo ! I have gone  
Up on the Ariyan, the eightfold Way  
That goeth to the state of Amata,  
Nirvana have I realized, and gazed  
Into the mirror of the (holy) Dharm.  
I, even I am healèd of my hurt,  
Low is my burden laid, my task is done,  
My heart is wholly set at liberty.  
I, Kisā-Gotamī have uttered this.

Another sister Sujātā sees in that Path the culmination of her quest :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Pārāpariya (947) and Phussa (980).

## POETIC LICENCE?

For there, e'en as I sat, (the spirit) touched  
The Dharm' immaculate, the Path of Amata. (149.)

Chāpā resignedly loses her husband when he leaves her to join the Master.

And so he went to the Nerañjarā  
And saw the Very Buddha on the bank  
Teaching the Path of Amata. (309.)

But most eloquent about it is the last and perhaps the latest of the women-poets, Sumedhā.

I have come, I repeat, to the conclusion, that the last few, the longest poems of the nuns were written compositions, not sayings long orally remembered and at a later date, when compositions took scriptural birth, committed to writing. It is also possible that editors took over an oral 'ballad' ascribed to Sumedhā, and fashioned it into the often elegant and often very moving poem that we now have. In either case the more elaborate result does not possess the spiritually convincing power of the terser sayings. Given a growing vocabulary of words and the new attraction of seeing them grouped in space, there will inevitably come the temptation to 'splash about' with term and metre. One may use now this term, now that phrase, possibly without duly weighing the true significance they may have had, or may yet have in one spiritual experience. One has in fact, as writer as well as composer, become an artist of the stylus. One may even choose a phrase because it sounds, rather than is, impressive. Thus we find Sumedhā now ascribing to Nirvana the keynote power she elsewhere gives to Amata. With this warning I come back to her poem.

As her plea that she may leave the world draws to its impassioned close, she invokes the ideals she alone finds worth following. Earlier she had protested :

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

All my heart's love is to nirvana given !  
... beyond nirvana's bliss is naught.

But now it is the older call that is invoked :

Since Amata exists, what are for thee  
the bitter draughts of sense ?

Since Amata exists, what are for thee  
the fevers of desire ?

She then invokes 'emancipation' (not *vimutti*, but the relatively late term *mokkha*) :

Emancipation waits ! O how canst thou  
Be satisfied with sensual joys, wherein  
Lie bonds and death ? . . .  
Cast not away because of some vain joy  
Of sense, the vaster happiness sublime,  
Lest like the finny carp thou gulp the hook  
Only to find thyself for that foredone.

And then, casting off in her solemn ecstasy the bonds of metre, she stammers forth in a whirl of words a picture of 'the Way', reverting therewith to Amata. For the Commentator it is to nirvana she is reverting, but she does not name it, only the 'Way', and that she calls not *magga* but *pada*.

There is that groweth never old ! O how  
Canst thou be satisfied with sense-desires  
That age so soon ? Are not all things reborn,  
Where'er they be, gripped by disease and death ?  
This that doth ne'er grow old, that dieth not,  
This never ageing, never dying Path—  
No sorrow cometh there, no enemies,  
Nor is there any crowd ; none faint, none fail,  
No fear cometh, nor aught that doth torment—  
To this, the Path of Amata have gone  
Full many. And today e'en now 'tis to be won,  
But only by a life that's utterly  
Surrendered in devotion. Labour not,  
And ye shall not attain !

Is there a reader who, seeking what is worth while, can read these lines even to-day without emotion? In her outlook here, she has taken us back to an earlier day, and in that peroration we hear the beating of the drum of Amata; we see the open gates.

But nirvana was for her and her contemporaries the winner. For Buddhism of to-day Amata is dead. So too is 'emancipation', 'liberty', 'release', 'deliverance'. 'We do not teach it', I am told. For Buddhism (at least that of south Asia) has turned utterly from its mother, the Immanence of the Upanishads; it sees in growing and unending spiritual life nothing beyond a recurring birth and dying of the man's instruments, denying that the man is other than they. Hence the virtually positive ideal of the term Amata has been exchanged for the more truly negative notion of a waning out (nirvana).

This, it is true, is qualified as being "happy", "bliss", but illogically, since with no 'experiencer' to experience happiness, the state is, as such, unthinkable.

Historically it is for me an interesting point, that the Commentary, with the later ideals it usually emphasizes, should have nevertheless perpetuated the feature of certain men "seeking Amata". I can only explain it as forming a part of the traditional story about such men, a tradition which there was 'piety' in maintaining and, for the exponent, an element of personal interest in mentioning. I have alluded to this busy piety in supplying us, in connection with Sāriputta, with his life-quest of Amata. The exegesis goes further and shows us Sāriputta and his friend, watching a hill-top 'fair' (*samajja*) near Rājagaha, considering how in a few years not one person present would be yet alive on earth, and how "with agitation they decided to seek a doctrine of release", a story which has not been made canonical. A wise choice, for it muddles the two ideals:

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

Amata and 'release', and I do not recognize Sāriputta as being 'rattled' at such a very normal consideration. It savours of that shrinking from man's normal fate in bodily life of old age and dying, which has led to the misconstruction of the Sakyan New Word into what I have called a 'doctor-gospel'. The man who believes that, as 'man', his destiny is immortal, in spite of the recurring need of renewal of his bodily instruments, will not be shuddering at the vision of men's normal 'passing on'.

I shall not win consent, but I would still say, that in the 30 couplets ascribed to Sāriputta, I do not see any that make me say: Here is the man! I incline to think that, in our anthology over that highly revered name, we have preserved for us 14 short poems by men whose names have not "lived for evermore" but which, sealed, so to speak, as by Sāriputta have not been let die. We know this has happened in the case of many verses ascribed to Omar Khayyam, nor will he be a unique case. Were this little book of more license as to length, I would go into the 14, and compare with them prose sayings related of Sāriputta. As it is I can but instance one feature in each. In the verses we see appreciation of the quiet detached contented recluse, peacefully awaiting the hour when it could be said of him too:

Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.

Thus:

Not fain am I to die nor yet to live.  
I shall lay down this mortal frame anon  
With mind alert, with consciousness controlled.  
With thought of death I dally not, nor yet  
Delight in living. I await the hour  
Like any hireling who hath done his task.

Now for me Sāriputta will have been a man of arduous and intense energy. Not out of harmony with the verses cited, he

## CAUSATION

will not in my opinion have chosen to express himself in just that way. But he was certainly "a name to conjure by" in early Buddhism; poets not of his lineage adopted his name as poets, and, next to personal earthly immortality, it was no hard fate to live on under such an aegis.

It remains a little strange too, that, whereas Amata, as we have seen, is the pointedly acknowledged ideal and is referred to as such in the Order's teaching, it should find no mention whatever in the verses of the man whose quest for it introduces him to us in the Vinaya, or Book of Discipline's records.<sup>1</sup> That, when he, so seeking, is referred to a new teacher whose response is along a different, even a discrepant line, forms a very curious fissure across the record, into which I have gone at length elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Here I am not pursuing further either this teacher or his theory. But that causation, and not Amata became in early Buddhist literature a leading tenet should show us how, especially in the necessarily unbalanced status of a new gospel, the older teaching which it seeks to deepen, to expand, may get pushed aside by other new movements of thought. The query of the older teaching: "Where then does man at death come to be?"<sup>3</sup> is pushed aside by the consideration: "'Were it not better he came not to be?'" Beset here by ills—and are not we monks, by our calling, to demonstrate this?—' is not his ideal rather his fading out without return from such conditions, and his aim, to supply a true principle governing all things to secure that fading out?

Now it is both of these, ideal and aim, that we can see pushing out, with some success, the older ideal of Amata as worded in Veda and Upanishad.

<sup>1</sup> *Vinaya Texts*, i, pp. 144 f. (S.B.E., vol. XIII).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *What was the original gospel in Buddhism?* Ch. VII.

<sup>3</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 3, 2, 13.



## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

The downward path for Amata was the making it a fanciful metaphor for a divine liquid not to be drunk so much as to be sprinkled over. Possibly this was from the Vedic association of *amṛta* with Soma-juice. Immortality became merely 'ambrosia' or rather, 'nectar'. Thus we find an aged ailing man, after his interview with Gotama, confessing to Sāriputta, as he left, that "the Blessed One by his talk has sprinkled me with Amata."<sup>1</sup>

This diverted meaning we find also in our poets. Or rather, in their Commentary. I may have overlooked, but it is only here that I find Amata mentioned in this relatively feeble simile. Thus in the Nuns' Commentary we find the First Utterance at Benares likened to "a draught of Dhamma-ambrosia"; we find Sikkā's teaching likened to a "sprinkling with ambrosia" (or rather nectar). But in exegesis generally Amata is invariably equated with nirvana, or else it is passed by, ignored. Clear is it, that for monks and their world the old concept of Amata has faded out. Not for them were their pulses quickened by the throbbing of the Founder's drum of the Immortal.

But in the newer term for the Ideal : Nirvana, we see a word which, while Amata sickened into a mere 'nectar', grew so strong in appeal, that it became what I see as an editorial tag inserted in earliest records of the Order, for which at its birth it had but a minor appeal. Why do I claim this as true?

The earliest appearance of nirvana in Indian literature is in (a) the Buddhist Pali Suttas, (b) the Bhagavad-Gītā, now assigned, as I gather, to the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Here (in b) it is used only in the compound Brahmanirvana : a merging into Deity (II, 72 ; v. 24 f.). In the Suttas of the Third Collection, the Samyutta, we find Sāriputta, asked "What is it that is called nirvana?" answering, that it

<sup>1</sup> *Kindred Sayings*, iii, 2.

## AN AESTHETIC ASSET?

is the waning out of the three springs or roots of evil : lust, hate, and stupidity. There is here implied only purgative moral discipline, not a summum bonum. It is difficult to imagine him suppressing the latter alternative. No Christian teacher would so define 'heaven'.

Yet in 'his' verses 'Sāriputta' says :

He to nirvana surely finds the way,  
To utmost haven safely steers his course. (990.)

Surely he cannot have made both pronouncements !

To the rejoinder : But is not nirvana in the First Utterance (or 'sermon') said to be the end of the middle Way ? I have elsewhere claimed this as a fairly obvious gloss, and must here pass on.

But in sound '*nibbāna*', '*nirvana*' was a musical word ; even we have so found it here to-day. Is it just possible, that in a literature which, when new, was wholly oral, nirvana owes its manifest popularity with the nun-poets to its convenient and musical rhythm ? I don't claim to have here a strong argument ; but there may be some reason why these use the word much oftener than the monk-poets. Take for instance its strikingly effective use in Patāchāra's poem :

With ploughshares ploughing up the fields, with seed  
Sown in the breast of earth, men win their crops,  
Enjoy their gains and nourish wife and child.  
Why cannot I, whose life is pure, who seek  
To do the Master's word, no sluggard am,  
Nor puffed up, win to nibbana's bliss ?

One day, bathing my feet, I sit and watch  
The water as it trickled down the slope.  
Thereby I set my heart in steadfastness,  
As one doth train a horse of noble breed.

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

Then going to my cell, I take my lamp  
And seated on my couch I watch the flame.  
Grasping the pin, I pull the wick right down  
Into the oil . . .  
Lo ! the Nibbana of the little lamp  
And to my heart release !

It was a strange gospel. Beside Amata it is as darkness to light ;] beside the Pavamāna hymn it is as the body of the tired worker to the fresh call of the dawn. And yet for the world-forsaker we may discern its attraction, even if us it fails to draw. In some of the nuns' verses the reader may see, better than in that above, the possibly aesthetic asset '*nibbana*' may have been in composition. But with regard to my translation, I should interject this : that in a few cases I have rendered as nirvana the less musical past participle *nibbūta*. This is of dual origin meaning both 'covered' and 'still', 'quiescent', but it is explained exegetically as "with complete nirvana". It goes to form a refrain in poems XV, XVI, XVIII, XXXIV, LXVI, LXXVI, LXXXVI, CI, CV. Here are verses with effective nirvana's (not *nibbuta*) :

I saw Dhamma, the pure, the passionless,  
Nirvana, path that leads beyond decease. (97.)

Nirvana have I realized, and gazed  
Into the mirror of the (holy) Dharm. (222.)

Win thou enlightenment  
And the thing that's highest ; gain nirvana . . . (432.)

and finally our Sumedhā :

. . . Now listen, mother, father, both :  
All my heart's love is to nirvana given,

‘ H E A V ’ N ! ’

and again :

E'en 'mong the devas sure refuge is none.  
Bliss of nirvana : there is naught beyond !

How truly in such lines has nirvana usurped the place once given to Amata. Let us set beside these the monks' usage of the term.

Nirvana (but not *nibbuta*) we find also in refrains : Thus Vacchapāla :

Who shapes his life by rule of them-that-Wake (buddhas),  
For him nirvana is not hard to find. (71.)

How does not the word lend itself to the lilt :

*nibbānaṃ na hi tena dullabhaṃ !*

Mahānāga and others use it in refrains, e.g. " Far from nirvana standeth he," and " near to . . ." We are reminded of the 'blessed' word 'Heav'n' in negro 'spirituals', with an equally vague meaning. And we wonder perhaps how far in Nāgita's couplet (86) it is aesthetic sentiment which may be dominant :

Outside our Order many others be, who teach  
A way never, like this one, to nirvana leading.  
But he, the Exalted One, the blessed Master's self  
Instructs as 'twere by just the palms o'th' hand  
outspreading. (86.)

Here a graver note is struck :

Gotama of Rājagaha :

Now are we free of debt, O lust, to thee,  
Now fare we to nirvana where man weeps  
No more. (138.)

And Bākula :

O great, O wondrous is nirvana's bliss,  
Revealed by him, the utterly Awake !  
There comes no grief, no passion, haven sure,  
Where ill and ailing perish evermore. (227, 263.)

## THE IMMORTAL AND NIRVANA

Here I leave this strange word for musically naming that welfare, that becoming utterly Well which these men and women had given up all to win. In that it was This that they sought, it may be *relatively* unimportant in what form of words they clothed it : amata or nirvana. They sought rid-dance from the worse, winning of the Better. If it was not the Best, that was not their fault ; we can none of us see That even yet. We too seek a Better, and we seek it as not just what we can find here, even though the worth we hold it in is so truly ours, that we, with them can speak of it as held by us already. The will to seek and find that which is ' Well '—this is the one thing needful and this they had.

But that they called this ' Well ' now by a stronger term, now by a weaker one is not to be lightly dismissed as ' relatively unimportant '. For on the one hand, the name used is a measure of changed and changing religious values, on the other, it affects for good or worse the mental shaping of the ' Well ' sought by the heirs of this nominally varying tradition. And these with no better name, as yet, for the ' Well ' they seek, will tend to be perplexed, distracted.

Let me take in illustration information given me by a European scholar long resident in Burma. Learned monks, he wrote, " may be grouped, in this connection, into three divisions of opinion : Nirvana is complete extinction ; this can be proved from the Pitakas. Nirvana is a glorious life of eternal happiness ; this can be proved from the Pitakas. Nirvana is the mystery of Buddhism, and no one knows what it really is. The Buddha never made any definite statement about it ; this can be proved from the Pitakas. Class 3 is the most numerous, but tends to agree with 1 ". That *nibbana*, and even the more emphatic *parinibbana* could mean, when Pali Suttas were being compiled, nothing transcendent, but just a good or ' well ' in

## A BETTER NAME

physical life is practically overlooked, and an English Buddhist monk expressed surprise to me when I quoted from the Second Collection : " Here Māgandiya stroked his limbs and said : This is health, Gotama ; this is nirvana ; for now I am in health and wellbeing." Yet this is one of the 62 ' heretical views ' in the first Sutta of the first Collection.

Clearly the old supplanter is, as name, no good guide for to-day. Better were it, that true seekers, aware of what they are resolutely groping after, should give to That a name fitting the new day that is theirs.

## Chapter VII

### THE AIM AND THE QUEST

One term there is in our Anthology for the religious ideal which merits more attention than even the two I have discussed. This is the word *attha*, in Sanskrit *artha*. Coming so to speak between the older term *amata*, warm with the yet living breath of two great religious traditions—that of the Vedas and that of Immanence—and the incomer *nirvana*, which was being inflated with the growing strength of world-forsaking tendency, it owes its being as religious keynote solely to the fact and the nature of the new gospel of the Sakyans. They had been converting the static rapture of Immanence into the seeing life here and elsewhere as a great dynamic opportunity. Life here and now was looked upon by them as a 'moment' (*khana*), or 'opportunity' (*thāna*), for progress towards a becoming That Who each man and woman potentially is. Now man so seeking progress is essentially *atthiko*: one with an 'aim' or 'object' (*attha*).

Here was no new word. Both Vedas and Upanishads use the word *artha* for aim and object; in the latter sense it may mean object of sense rather than aim of will. But I do not find the word brought into the service of the very heart of religion till the Sakyan gospel took it over. In the first utterance, called 'of Benares', man is shown in religion as seeking an 'aim': *attha*; is shown that the right 'way' or road to seek it, as making for it, as being associated with that aim



(*attha-sāhita*),<sup>1</sup> is a mid-course between an unregulated and a regulated use of will, between, that is, just impulse and too much restriction. The one thing needful is advance in the aim. It was this, rather than actual attainment in any final way, that the religious man of India needed. In Immanence he had been shown as from a mountain top the infinite possibilities of his nature : That art *thou* ! He saw himself as already *there*, as at an eternal rest-point of attainment. He needed actually to be taught the whole gamut of attaining, of becoming That Who by nature he was, so to speak, in the germ. And this word *attha*, from the root of *r* : to reach out after, fitly and helpfully did the Sakyans bring forward to an importance not assigned it previously, as expressing the true corrective needed in man's religious outlook of that day. I am not saying the new emphasis was a planned remedy. When a man slips he does not first plan how to save himself from falling. He acts first. But I maintain we shall not understand 'Buddhism' at its birth or after, if we do not note the instinctively felt need of the Sakyans, to hold in true worth the religious danger of their day, and their grasping the best word to convey a sense of it.

Let us review their use, in a new emphatic sense, of this word 'aim'. In my translation I have largely rendered it, not as 'aim', but as 'good' (with a capital G). Let readers replace this by 'Aim'. Sometimes I have 'quest': this is better. Let them consider these lines :

Malitavambha first (105). A young brahmin, possibly of a later date,<sup>2</sup> he has selected quarters where earthly needs could form the least possible spiritual hindrance :

<sup>1</sup> Or *-sāhita*.

<sup>2</sup> The teacher converting him is called Pacchabhu, = Epigonus, a name unknown, possibly noting later date.

## THE AIM AND THE QUEST

Where I am straitened let me never dwell ;  
Let me go thence if life too pleasant prove.  
Ne'er will the man with eyes to see abide  
Where aught may hinder in the Aim supreme.

Take next one who, if authorship be correctly assigned, was, on the contrary, of the earliest date : Kassāpa of Gayā, whose faith in bathing, as insuring spiritual purity, makes me wonder whether we may here have antecedents of the Persian Mandaeans :

At morn, at noonday, at the eventide  
Thrice in the day I gat me at Gayā  
Down in the water at Gayā's spring feast,  
For 'sins that I have done in other births,  
In days gone by, those here and now hereby  
I wash away' :—thus did I once believe.

I heard a voice that uttered winning words,  
Whereof the burden wedded Dharma, Aim,  
And on their meaning, true and genuine,  
I pondered earnestly. (345-7.)

I class these two, late and early, together for the special reason, that they both use *saṃhita*, a word 'wedded', from the day of the First Utterance, to 'aim', viz. in that the two ways not to be followed are said to be 'not *saṃhita*' with that aim, the 'middle way' being *saṃhita*. It is not a term we usually meet with in the Suttas save in this connection.

In Kassapa of Uruvelā, brother of the last (Kassapa is a surname), as with Surādha, we get 'aim' welded into one of those refrains which are a common feature in the anthologies, a characteristic perhaps of an unwritten literature :

And the great Aim for which I left the world,  
Forsaking home a homeless life to lead,  
Even that Aim (and high reward) I've won,  
For I am he whose bonds are riven in twain. (136 ; 380.)

## AIM AND GOOD

Like in form are refrain-types by Sumana, a commoner, and Saṃkicca, a brahmin :

The very Aim have I attained, the Buddha's bidding done. (332.)<sup>1</sup>

The Aim for which I bade the world farewell,  
And left the home the homeless life to lead,  
That highest Aim have I accomplished,  
And every bond and fetter is destroyed. (605.)

Let me not be supposed to see in *attha* as used in these poems always a transcendent Aim ; it could just mean our 'good' of self, or of others : thus Brahmadata :

Who doth not, when reviled,  
Revile again, a twofold victory wins.  
Both of the other and himself he seeks  
The good (*attha*) . . . (443.)

and 'great' Kaccāna :

Who greedy seeks to taste life's feast entire,  
Neglects the 'good' (*attha*) that brings true happiness. (494.)

It is when inmost will reverberates in emotion ; as in good  
Pārāpariya :

Is a work with Aim connected,  
Is his love set on th' Ideal,  
Let him take the work and do it ;  
Other loves that love surpasseth. (742.)

or the 'forward view' is revealed : the 'Aim supreme'  
(*param'attha*) as with Telakāni :

Whose doctrine can I to my bosom take  
Whereby the highest Aim may to my knowing come ? (748.)

<sup>1</sup> In my translation 'Ar'hautship' should be deleted.

## THE AIM AND THE QUEST

and Soṇa-Kolivisa :

I practised calm for winning utmost Aim (639)

that life is seen both ' steady and whole '. Only here is it that the more elect poets could find satisfaction, for instance ' great ' Kassapa :

Enough is here for me, who fain would seek  
The Aim, almsman with self intent. (1066-7.)

How is not the very man, self, spirit, intensified here as real in these lines, the man who is *atthiko* : aim-er, seeker, the man of will with ' self intent ' !

I come to the Sisters. I find only six lines referring to the Aim, not lacking interest of their own. Thus in Mittakālī's five couplets, highest Aim is contrasted with low ends also called *attha* :

Leaving my home through call of faith, I sought  
The homeless life, and dwelt with eye intent  
On offerings from the faithful, and the praise  
Of this one and the gratitude of that.  
Renouncing highest aim, low aim  
I followed in the toils of vicious things,  
And zest for aim in my high calling lost. (93.)<sup>1</sup>

The only other two whom I find using the term betray, by associating it with the later formula of what is still the Buddhist Trinity : Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha as threefold ' refuge ' (and not the twofold refuge ascribed to a final utterance of the Founder : the Self and Dhamma " and no other "), that they are possibly later contributors to the poems. This is how they speak : Puṇṇā, once a slave-girl, and Rohini, a well-to-do brahmin's daughter :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vaddha, p. 23 f.

## LOWERED VALUE

Puṇṇā, admonishing her master, a brahmin, to abandon his faith in spiritual purging by immersion in the river, urges him :

Go thou and seek Buddha, Dhamma and eke  
The Order, and from such as them take on  
Thyself the Precepts : let them be thy Good (249),

injunction which would pass as very orthodox in Ceylon to-day. And Rohinī (288) uses the same stock verse.

Thus the Aim (*attha*) became dwarfed from its earlier range. It began in Buddhism as essentially *samparāyika* : 'as belonging to the Beyond',<sup>1</sup> as ineffably 'supreme' (*parama*) ; as transcending earthly life. It came to mean cult of a superman, a code of doctrine and a company of believers—here and here only. And in the anthology we get both earlier and later range.

The word too had its weaknesses. Man has many aims, varied objects, matters to be made articulate, words to be explained. All met in the one word *attha*, and between them they worsened the power of the term to evoke that which at one time had a vogue as name for a gospel's New Word. Especially was the word worsened when, as the thesaurus of Sayings to be treasured and handed on grew, and literary study as to the orthodox 'meaning' of terms became ever more important. I believe it was this meaning of *attha*—its meaning as 'meaning'—that gradually sapped its edifying power, and led to its expulsion from the heart of the First Utterance, only the negative use of it being left in : the two side-ways namely that did "not lead to *attha*". When the Mid-Way comes in, which of course did lead to *attha*, this word is taken out. Doubtless its force died slowly. In the Canon we find a comment, repeated, put into the Founder's

<sup>1</sup> *Vinaya Texts*. . . . A king tells village syndics : I have spoken of matters temporal ; the 'Blessed One' is near and will speak to you of *attha samparāyika*. Go to him.

## THE AIM AND THE QUEST

mouth, which is virtually a word-play or pun, to which Indian literature was addicted : about promising disciples who confessed to *attha*, but spoke not of *attā*, that is, of self. *Attha* still stands high ; the 'man' is fading out.

Was this perhaps because in the current Immanence there was lacking that which we, as having it, owe to Hebrew values : —that the man, in seeking, is sought, that the man, in drawing nearer, is drawn ? Man's is the will in the way towards the Better, the More, the Most, the Best. But his will is also *willed*, and if he can "see" this, his effort can be made strong, and he can be made to feel how very real he is.

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love,  
Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."<sup>1</sup>

We have seen here how the 'Aim' is wedded to another word, one also of highest import in earliest Buddhism :

. . . words

Whereof the burden wedded Dhamma, Aim  
(*vācam dhamm'attha-sahitam padam*)

from a poem attributed to a very early convert, Kassapa of Gayā. And we meet it not seldom in the anthology. In another couplet this word *dhamma* (Sanskrit : *dharma*) is 'wedded' to the Way (*maggā*) :

Dhamma I heard which that Great One had taught,  
And felt its mighty virtues known by him . . .  
The Way for winning Amata I won. (69.)

. . . to one who rightly Dhamma doth behold. (Nuns, 61.)

Dharma, for India, has ever meant 'what ought to be, or to

<sup>1</sup> Book of Jeremiah.



be done'; more literally 'to be borne', as it were in mind or heart as guide, or what we call conscience. The Suttas in two contexts show the Founder speaking of Dhamma as that which a man "longing for the Great Spirit" must worship. He thus 'wedded' the name for Deity (*Ātmā*) in his day with Dhamma, and is found doing no less in his final injunctions. But the word underwent, as usual, a worsening in meaning. It came to be used for code of doctrine, as divided into nine parts: Sutta, Gāthā, etc. And in this meaning we find nuns' verses referring to it, and tying it up with one formula that came to be held very central: the Four Truths: verses 321, 403 and 279. And more; the word is often used for 'religion' itself. Translation of it is ever a difficulty and terms such as truth and law and right are used for it. In translating the Anthology I mainly used 'norm'—a word highly convenient for metre, but too insistent on merely maintaining status, to fit well a term always envisaging a Better. I now leave it untranslated. As with other terms its use here betrays the long coming to be of the anthology.



## Chapter VIII

### SAFETY AND PEACE

I come back to the case of such of the poets as deal more than others, not so much with a golden Leitmotif of their whole life, as with a keen sense of abatement of crisis surmounted in their having forsaken the world. Theirs has not been a dominant quest to achieve and attain something greater, longer than any one span of life can bring, rather is it a Better felt as contrast to something become intolerable, to a weight of worry, of dread, of misery. These are the poets with whom we can associate terms of safety, refuge, peace.

And it is these with whom we might look to find the positive benefit conferred by the coming apart and the dwelling apart. We do find it sung, but not only by these. It is noteworthy that the four monk-poets and the three nun-poets who alone use the striking compound *yoga-kkhemā*, that is, haven or safety-(after)-toil, are not among the many who are what I have called 'refugees'. They were just poets: they, that is, who used their gift to 'voice' the sorrows no less than the joys of their fellows.

This word *yoga-kkhemā* first emerges in the later book No. X of the Rīg-Veda; it is also to be found, but rarely in Brāhmaṇa and Upanishad literature, but not with the poignancy it has in this Buddhist Anthology. The two halves were early used for anything presenting 'effort-success'. But in the anthology this little word-history always refers to what our own hymn sings for All Saints Day:

## TOIL AND PEACE

The strife is o'er, the battle done,  
The victory of life is won,  
The song of triumph is begun,

Alleluia !

In Buddhism *yoga* means always effort ; *kHEMA* derives from *kshi*, to possess, and means the thing or place won, be it peace, safety or haven. Here is how those seven use it, 'security' and 'haven' being *yogakkHEMA* :

Come, O Dhīrā, reach up and touch the End,  
The happy calm to workings of the mind,  
Bring thou the (final) waning out to pass,  
Uttermost haven of security. (6.)

Mittā, thou sister-friend, who camest forth  
In faith, become the lover of the friends,  
Make thou become the things (we know are) good,  
To win the haven of security. (8.)

Bhadrā (9) echoes the foregoing.

Suppiya, who, beyond being " of a despised class ", was driven by no tragedy, is associated with one of the most outstanding couplets, whereof more later. He says :

O would that I who hourly waste, might change  
For that which ne'er decays—who ever burn,  
Might change for that cool bliss, e'en for the peace  
That passeth all, safety beyond compare ! (31.)

The remaining two are Puṇṇamāsa :

All the five hindrances that bar the way  
Against the haven safe I've put aside. (171.)

and verses covered by the name Sāriputta :

Whose heart is to obsessions given o'er—  
A deer seduced by fascination's snare—  
He from nirvana goeth far astray,  
To utmost haven fails to find the course. (989.)

## SAFETY AND PEACE

The second half of the compound : *khema* is also found without the *yoga* ; thus the eloquent Migajāla ; who singing of the Way (and he or his editors is late enough to call this ' eight-fold ' ) says :

Showing a vision by the light of truth  
Of things as come to be by way of cause.  
Yea, to the mighty haven doth it wend ;  
The way of peace bringing luck of the Goal (*pariyosāna-bhaddako*).

Another term much used in this connection is *santi* (Sanskrit : *shānti*), peace, and corresponding adjective *santa*, as we see in two of the foregoing contexts.

No contrast drawn between what ' men ' say and what ' women ' say can ever afford to be pressed ; yet there is certainly here a tendency in the nuns' verses to stress the peace they have won subjectively. I mean, the word is more often, with the latter, accompanied by *chetāso* : peace of ' mind ', or ' purpose '. Thus there are half a dozen contexts resembling *Sāmā*'s :

Four times, nay five, I sallied from my cell  
And roamed afield to find the peace of mind  
I sought in vain, and governance of thoughts  
I could not bring into captivity. (37.) (cf. 39 f., 42 f., 169.)

*Sāmā* has left the world in grief at the loss of a woman-friend ; the new life as such has proved, not itself so much a refuge, as yielding conditions favourable to finding one. This for ' An Anonymous Sister ' (68 f.), a nurse in the rancee Pajāpati's household, who follows, rather than is driven. Nanduttarā's is a very different story. A Sister in the new Jain Order, she is called, and is, like others in the Anthology, a touring debater, till defeated by Moggallāna. Since no reference to this is in the verses, it is possible we have here poem and commentary

PEACE AS FELT

editorially misfitted. Nanduttarā, by her confession, seems to have served "both God and mammon", till she "found faith and left home". And then it was that

All the long line of lives was snapt in twain,  
Ay, every wish and yearning for it gone.  
All that had tied me hand and foot was loosed,  
And I had won to peace of mind. (91.)<sup>1</sup>

The only monk-poet who refers this 'peace' subjectively as do these six nuns is Sona-Kolivisa (641): and his allusion is rather part of an appendix of general reflection:

He who hath compassed yielding up the world,  
And hath attained detachment of the mind,

His mind is set at perfect liberty.  
For such an almsman rightly freed, whose mind  
Hath peace, there is no mounting up of deeds,  
Nor yet remaineth aught for him to do.

... His mind stands firm, detached,  
And of all that he notes the passing hence.

The appendix is in fact Order-property, being inserted in both Vinaya and Suttas.<sup>2</sup>

One more interesting alliance between thought and peace is in the fine word-building of Bhūta's poem (521):

When that he makes become the path of peace,  
From sorrow free, untarnished and uncorrelate,  
Cleansing from all that doth defile, and severing  
From every bond and gyve, no higher bliss  
Is given to men than this.

He 'makes become' (*bhāveti*) is a term, as I have shown,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also ver. 458.

<sup>2</sup> *Vinaya Texts*, ii, 1 ff.; *Gradual Sayings*, iii, 270.

<sup>3</sup> *To Become or not to Become*, 1937.

## SAFETY AND PEACE

used constantly in the many enjoinings of the Suttas. It is true that the right object or thing to be so wrought is coming to be less the growing 'man', and too much his ideas about this and that, but the stimulated growth would after all tend to take verbal form as ideas. In my translation I have wrongly let it appear as if it were the 'path' that was the agent, not the man, as in all the other verses is evident.

That entrance into the Order did not always entail the peace and safety sought appears from Sappadāsa's dramatic little poem :

Full five and twenty years had passed since I  
Had left the world and in the Order lived,  
And yet not for one fingersnap of time  
Had I found peace of mind . . . (405.)

Sumāna the boy-monk found it much more quickly :

He having won the peace supreme  
And realized th' inconstancy. (434.)

Nor does Godatta, a caravan-leader, who left the world out of remorse over ill-treatment of his fallen draught-ox, appear to have taken long. Passing in his poem from his own sympathy with "the mettled brute of noble breed", he sketches a picture of the good life as culminating in

So winning perfect peace, as fires extinct,  
They wholly pass away, sane and immune. (672.)

Here finally is this matter of inner peace contrasted with the poet "seeing, in the monks' quarrelsome tastes" (namely at the notorious Kosambi) "what might have been the downfall of his own good" :

Abundantly this almsman doth rejoice  
For the blest truths the Buddha hath revealed  
Are his, and he hath won the path of peace,  
And his the bliss where worldly cares are stilled. (11.)

## REFUGE

A third and last term descriptive of gain in world-forsaking was 'refuge', in Pali *saraṇa*, from the root *shri*, 'resort', a word which, we are told has, as identical in origin with our 'hall', 'hell', the meaning of to hide. Telakāni's stirring poem, in which we feel, as in few others, the spiritual toil, uses it :

Thunder of thought distracted overhead,  
And fettering wraiths of cloud about my path :—  
The rush of lust-born impulse and intent  
Doth thither sweep me to a sceptic's doom.

. . . . .

Make thee a dyke, good sir, to dam the streams ;  
See that the mind's strong current ruthlessly  
Dash thee not hence like any log away.

'Twas even so for me who sought in fear,  
On this side for the distant shore, when he,  
The Master, followed by his saintly throng,  
He, the true Refuge, and with insight arm'd,  
Held out to me a stairway, strongly wrought  
And firm, made out of Dhamma-heart of oak,  
And to me toiling spake : ' Be not afraid ! ' (760 ff.)

Other like tributes to their Helper are borne by Sela and Angulimāla (838, 882).

Other popular and more picturesque terms for the 'refuge' are the three : *tāna*, a 'crossing over', *lena*, a cave, and *dīpa*, literally tway-waters, i.e., land between waters, or island. All of these are used by our poets : Telakāni's *dīpa* I have rendered 'dyke', as above ; Sirimanda prefers *tāna* :

By death the world is held enslaved ; by age  
And by decay escorted, guarded sure,  
Without a refuge (*at-tāno*), everlastingly  
Struck as by thief with bludgeon and with sword.



## SAFETY AND PEACE

Like forest fires behold them drawing nigh,  
Death and disease, decay, dread trinity,  
Whom to confront no strength sufficeth, yea,  
No swiftness aught avails to flee away. (449-50.)

The term among these I find preferred by the nuns is that which Buddhism has retained in its preference up to the present day : refuge (*saraṇa*), as threefold ; and it is in this church-credal form that they usually cite it :

Lo ! I for refuge to the Buddha go,  
Dhamma and Sangha, to the Seer. (53, 132, 249 f., 288.)<sup>1</sup>

Just what is it, in these and the other poems, for which safety, peace, shelter is felt as a pressing need ? I repeat, that whereas the Commentary, and, though rarely, the verses themselves sometimes tell of some particular trouble so marring the life in the world that the world had to be forsaken, the need felt proves to be less an individual set of conditions, and more something of wider, longer import. It is, namely, the growth of man's or woman's life as a whole. They are as gardeners considering the fostering of a plant, more than just the transplanting of it to a more favourable site. More often than not, we find the desirable riddance is a running-to-weed in the singer's nature, more especially a need of "governance of sense", and the rooting out of forms of enmity. Positively, there is no lack of naming the desirable forms of amity and virtue which could, within the 'shelter' found, be 'made to become'. And in very general terms there is ever cited, not only these growths in a More, but an ineffable Most, a Furthest Aim, a Goal somehow on the horizon, approach to which can, in the 'refuge', go on more unhindered.

Nevertheless I cannot, in the outlook of the poets, get away

<sup>1</sup> *Munim*. I imagine this additional reference to the first 'refuge' is simply *metri causa*.



from two important features : (i) their quarrel with the worse they seek to escape from is not merely with 'sense', but is with life itself; and (ii) they are more occupied with what they have done than with what remains to be done.

(i) The former issue is made cloudy through there being in their idiom no strong word for 'life'. *Jivita* is relatively weak; just bodily life. Sirimanda, above, uses it :

For every day and night that thou dost waste,  
By so much less thy life remains to live.  
Whether thou walk or stand or sit or lie,  
For thee the final day [of life] draws nigh.  
No time hast thou to dally heedlessly. (452.)

Far more frequently do we find the "dread trinity" (450) cited for 'life': death, old age, disease. And monk-values often added 'birth'. Dread as to these runs, as we know, right through the Buddhist tradition, an emphasis I have called a 'doctor-gospel', one for the body only. For this monastic tradition, man's worthiest aim—as best pursued in the cloister—was, here and now, so to consummate living that no seed of survival in what was 'life' was sown, life here and now thereby effecting a 'waning out' (*nirvana*) of all future living. To say anything positive as to this was but a wording the ineffable. But here are samples of how our poets envisaged survival.

Mittā contrasts her orthodoxy while in the world with her changed views :

On full-moon day and on the fifteenth day,  
And eke the eighth of either half the month  
I kept the feasts; I kept the precepts eight,  
The extra fasts, enamoured of the gods,  
And fain to dwell in homes celestial.

To-day one meal, head shaved, a yellow robe,  
Enough for me! I want no heaven of gods.  
Heart's pain, heart's pining have I trained away. (31 f.)

## SAFETY AND PEACE

As I have elsewhere said, it is, if a clean, rather an empty house to which she would invite us ; Jesus had a word to say about such.

Less tersely eloquent is Sīsūpachālā : some one whom she identifies with a popular ' Satan '—Māra—bids her think, as she sits, on happy brightland and aspire thither. She repeats his words and rejoins :

Ay, think upon the thrice-ten devas' heaven  
Where life yet flows by way of sense-desire.  
Consider how time after time they go  
From birth to death and death to birth again,  
Becoming this and then becoming that,  
Ever beset by the recurring doom  
Of hapless individuality,  
Whence comes no merciful enfranchisement.  
On fire is all the world, is all in flames !  
Ablaze is all the world, the heav'ns do quake ! (198 f.)

It is a lurid picture, and there was too the tradition that the Master had uttered her last lines here quoted in a talk to monk-converts.

Of the men, Kappa gives up faith in body-encased life as a bad job :

Lo ! such a thing this body is,  
Carried about on karma's car,  
To manifold becoming doomed,  
Now to success, to failure then.  
And they who say of it 'Tis mine !—  
Poor foolish blinded manyfolk—  
They swell the dreadful field of death,  
Grasping rebirth again, again. (574 f.)

Of the verses lumped as Sāriputta's are these :

On both sides [of the scene we look,] and lo !  
'Tis dying, not the dearth of death [we see].  
Be it the backward or the forward view. (1004.)

## SUICIDE

Sirimaṇḍa I have quoted, but Raṭṭhapāla's 18-verse poem, too long to quote, gives more fully a solemn picture of how man's 'art of living' is for the majority upset by 'the Touch', that is, death (776-93). The monkish vision of life, shown in what is known as the Way of the four stages, is not the forward view of the day of the birth of Buddhism :—the will to seek the Divine Self that man is in 'potency and through many lives to grow up into That—the nun Dhammadiṇṇā grasps at it in her couplet :

In whom desire to reach the final goal  
Is born, suffusing all the mind of her,  
Whose heart by lure of sense-desire no more  
Is held—'Bound-Upstreamer' shall she be called ! (12.)

Admirable woman !

It was a backward view that formed the measure of man's progress, once he had advanced to the first stage called 'reaching the stream' ; thereafter he went on to become a 'once-returner', then a 'no-returner', finally what was called 'worthy one' : *arahāṇa*, of which more later. In such, life had touched its highest—either on earth or in one better rebirth—he or she would thenceforth never again become wedded to a body no matter in what world.

This depreciation of life-as-we-know-it tended to bring the world-forsaker up against the query : If life be such bondage, were it not best to interfere by suicide ? Of such querists there are three men and one woman. I cite two : her first :

Although seven years in the Order, 'Sihā'<sup>1</sup> could not control her thoughts :

Distracted, harassed by desires of sense,  
Unmindful of the what and why of things,

---

<sup>1</sup> = lioness. The Sihās were a distinguished Vesālī family.

## SAFETY AND PEACE

Stung and inflated by the memories  
 Of former days, o'er which I lacked control,  
 Corrupting canker spreading o'er my heart,  
 I followed heedless dreams of happiness,  
 And got no even tenour to my mind,  
 All given o'er to dalliance with sense.  
 So did I fare for seven weary years,  
 In lean and sallow misery of unrest.  
 I wretched found no ease by day or night,  
 So took a rope and plunged into the wood :  
 'Better for me a friendly gallows-tree !'  
 I'll live again the low life of the world.  
 Strong was the noose I made, and on a bough  
 I bound the rope and flung it round my neck,  
 When see ! . . . my heart was set at liberty !

We do 'see'—and that is how the Indian woman, unlike the Western sister, who would vaguely imagine she was putting an end to it all, believes she is about to start it all again. The men-poets who quote such desperate plight, show preference for either the *sattha*, a word covering any kind of bladed weapon, or falling from a height. Of the three, here are Sappadāsa's verses :

Full five and twenty years had pssed since I  
 Had left the world and in the Order lived,  
 And yet not for one fingersnap of time  
 Had I found peace.  
 Intent and single vision ne'er I won,  
 Distraught and harassed by desires of sense ;  
 In tears, wringing my hands I left the lodge.  
 Nay, now I'll take a knife or else . . . For what  
 Is life to me ? And how can such as I,  
 Who by my life the training have denied,  
 Do better than set term to it and die ?  
 • So then I came and with a razor sat me down  
 Upon my couch. And now the blade was drawn  
 Across my throat to cut the artery . . .

## RETROSPECT

When lo ! in me arose the ' what and why ' of things.  
Danger was manifest, disgust checked flood.  
Thereat my heart was set at liberty.  
Behold the Dhamma of the What should be !  
The threefold wisdom have I made my own,  
And all the Buddha bids me do is done. (405-10.)

Of the other two, one arrests himself in similar fashion, the other, Vakkāli, is checked in time by the Founder, because he is not yet spiritually mature—so the commentary (p. 198). Where this stage has been reached, we find one disciple, against the pleading of Sāriputta, committing suicide, and being exempted from blame for this by the Founder, because he was so mature that he would not be reborn.<sup>1</sup> Now where one equal as teacher to the Master dissuades, while the Master himself blames not, it is clear we have no true record. The more in that Sāriputta gives no religious reason why Channa should not kill himself. As an unhealed wound, a scar in the records of monastic Buddhism, it is of interest.

(ii) I end on my other point: the preoccupation in most of the poems with what *had been done*. These would-be suicides were at least convinced that, with the exception of Channa, who just wished to end great bodily suffering, it was better to amputate a portion, not the last, of their life in a body, and go on elsewhere, elsewhere, crippled perhaps but bent on making good. But the majority of the poets are recorded as having made their *aññā*, exegetical term for confession of ultimate attainment, as far as could here and now be put into words. They had "done what was to be done". And since any future for them could not be described, they were content with Lucretius to stand on the cliff looking back across stormy oceans at the scene of their struggles. As I wrote of the Sisters: "there

<sup>1</sup> *Kindred Sayings*, iv, 30.

is no dwelling on what yet awaits them after one more death, hidden glories, more wonderful than the brief remaining span of 'cool' and calm they now know as *arahan's*. There is no pointing to an unrevealed mystery concerning which 'we would an if we could' sing something. It may be with them as with one who, after long toil and much peril, reaches home, and is content with that for the day, whatever life may yet give or ask for on the morrow. They have won up out of 'the whirlpool' (*vaṭṭa*), they have 'crossed over', they have attained something ineffable that now is, but is not to be described in terms of space or aftertime; and resting they sing. (They do not even just say, it is to be 'well', it is to be full-grown.) We will leave it at that."

So I wrote some thirty years ago. To-day I do not leave it at that. Appreciation is always desirable, but it must not blind us to limitations. And there is no doubt that these cloister-singers brought into their poems very strikingly the limited vision of monastic Buddhism. The Christian monk and nun may have won serenity and peace, but never over the backward view. They were incurable seekers, "seeking a better country that is a heavenly". And the best of them knew, that this seeking consisted in work of spiritual growth, of spiritual becoming proceeding unceasingly till death of the body, nor ending there. Compared with what these poets reveal, theirs was essentially a forward view, and a divine discontent with present attainment as not yet showing perfection, or state of being utterly well. I do not find this forward view in a single nun. Sumedhā rightly says :

it may be won,  
But only by a life that's utterly  
Surrendered in devotion. Labour not,  
And ye shall not attain,



## THE FORWARD VIEW

but she also says

to-day, e'en now 'tis to be won,

and counts on herself doing so if suffered to leave the world.  
And even then she has no better description to give of the  
quest than a striving

to root out birth and death,

negative work negatively described.

Among the monks there is one happy exception to this  
limited vision. Suppiya it is true has, in his one couplet :

O would that I who hourly waste, might change  
For that which ne'er decays—who ever burn  
Might change for that cool bliss—e'en for the peace  
That passeth all, safety beyond compare !

Only a wording of *conditions* of growth, of being 'well', but  
it is *aspiration* that he gives us, not the contented backward  
view. Ekavihāriya too and Tālapuṭa, as we have seen, are  
also seekers, but they are in a sad little minority.



## Chapter. IX

### LIFE IN THE ORDER :

#### (I) MUSING

The fact that, in introducing these two volumes of cloister poems to English readers, I drew no special attention to the frequent mention in them of what, in noun and verb is called *jhāna* (Sanskrit, *dhyāna*), does but show much immaturity in the translator. If for this a plea is needed, I can say that, in this matter, my pioneer teachers tended to turn thought in what I now hold was the wrong direction. Since their day, much attention has been paid to the now familiar, but then stranger word *yoga*, literally effort, but applied to introversive work of mind. *Yoga* and *jhāna* came to be more or less equated as Hindu and Buddhist terms for both concentration and ecstasy, for rapt abstraction or absorption (*Versenkung*). In this view I followed them.

Many years after publishing the Monks' Anthology in English, it was brought home to me, that whereas *yoga* was rightly called introversive, *jhāna* was in a way the opposite attitude; it was extraversive. Once this hypothesis was entertained, passages in the Canon took on new significance, going far to maintain its truth. And the misleading attitude towards *jhāna* which came to be held in the Canon itself it became possible to set up over against the earlier view. All this I have set out in detail elsewhere<sup>1</sup>; here I can only briefly contrast the two views.

<sup>1</sup> *Sakya*, Ch. IX; *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 186 ff.; *Original Gospel*, Ch. IX.

## LISTENING

The old view was that, in *jhāna*, the man withdrew attention from interest in matters of earthly experience, present and remembered, and made his mind a *tabula rasa*, by which to become aware of such other-world experience as we now call psychic. Thereby he might learn—not all could—how to hear, it might be also to see, men and women of another world who were willing to have intercourse with him. Their contact might be for his good or for his harm. This would depend on whether he was consistently a seeker after what was good or not. I have likened this older outlook to the course taken by Eli and the boy Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" This exactly expresses procedure in earlier *jhāna*. Introversive it only was in so far as the psychic experience, if clairaudient only, would resemble internal speech, like one's own inwardly uttered thoughts.

Later *jhāna* also involved withdrawal from what earth-sense brought. To effect this better, some one 'external' object was to be fixedly looked at, till sensation in general became numb, and the inner world of thought was left free. But whether this was to facilitate 'meditating' or 'contemplating', or awaiting intuitions is never very clear. Neither form is best rendered by 'reverie',<sup>1</sup> i.e. dilatory thinking. I use 'musing', just because, when rightly understood, this is not reverie, but alert attention, the word being derived from 'muzzling', the dog's lifting a sniffing muzzle when alert. The Shakespearian use of the term makes this clear.

Now what attitude towards *jhāna* is shown in the perhaps thirty references to it in our poems? I do not hold that their allusions show very clearly just what *jhāna* amounted to for them. Familiar with it many evidently were, so easily does the term and its compounds slip into their lines:

<sup>1</sup> As preferred in Chalmers' *Sutta-Nipāta* Translation (Harvard A.O.S.)

## LIFE IN THE ORDER

In the fair city of Patna, earth's fairest city,  
Dwelt two saintly sisters, born of the Sākiyas,  
Precept-observers, lovers of *jhāna*-musing,  
Learned ladies . . . (400 f.)

but for historical study it were interesting to elicit whether it was psychic culture they sought, or just pondering and moral purging. That noise was said to be a deterrent would apply to both cases. We read in the Vinaya, that monks on tour who were 'musers' were allotted quiet cave-quarters, and this emerges in an unnamed monk's poem :

To divers regions back and forth they fare,  
Heedless of heart upon their rounds, and balk  
The mind's due concentration. What forsooth  
Shall all this vagabondage bring to pass ?  
Hence is it meet that clamour be subdued,  
Nor harass him who fain would musing be. (37.)

This needed the apartness 'great' Kassapa seeks upon the heights :

Kassapa mounts some craggy coign and sits  
In musing rapt, (1059-61)

and he uses the words in a refrain. Musing for him is counted as one of the necessities of life :

These are the hills wherein I find delight.  
Enough are they for me who 's fain to muse,  
Alert and with a self that strives. (1065.)

This association of *jhāna* with 'striving' may be gathered also from blending text and commentary in the case of one of the penitent Magdalenes, Vimalā. She pictures herself in the Order as

. . . 'neath spreading boughs of forest tree  
I sit, a winner of the undistraught.

## PSYCHIC ENERGIES

This last term belongs to the formula for inducing 'jhāna': *avitakka* and, more literally taken, means 'of the not-discriminating', or 'not-perceiving'. Together with *avichāra*, not-pondering over, it refers to that awareness of passing earth-matters that was to be eliminated at the outset. Hence I translated it, not wrongly but freely, as

I sit and second *jhāna*'s rapture win,  
Where reasonings cease and joy and ease remain.

Joy and ease were then to go, but our Magdalene is content with her 'thus far'.

One other reference to *jhāna* as a formula may in passing be cited. This is Anuruddha's composite work, wherein he claims as follows :

In fivefold concentrated ecstasy,  
My heart goes up in peace and unity.  
Serene composure have I made my own ;  
And deva-sight for me is clarified.  
I know the destinies of other lives,

Life here below or elsewhere of life,  
Steadfast in fivefold *jhāna* sunk.

'Ecstasy', retained *metri causā*, is *jhāna* ; and a dating point is the use of the later 'fivefold', not the fourfold of the Suttas. But note the deva-sight as connected with *jhāna*.

Note also the endorsement of Vimalā's happiness in *jhāna*-practice by Bhaddiya's poem (842-65). Bhaddiya was among the young Sākiyan rajas, that is, country squires, of the Founders country, who joined him with Anuruddha, when the new mission began to prosper. He and his verses were an embodiment of happiness, so it is said. And his constant refrain is

Ungrasping muses Bhaddiya,

LIFE IN THE ORDER

even as that other former squire Anuruddha,

Contentedly serene and ne'er upset,  
Delighting in seclusion, blithe of heart,  
Aye strenuous . . .

makes a refrain of

Just muses Anuruddha. (892 ff.)

Happier is the lilt in my translation :

Sits Anuruddha, rapt in reverie,

but it was *not* what we understand by 'reverie'. On the contrary, it was, for these chosen spirits, happy work. No context is more contributive to the evidence that 'jhāna' was both psychic converse and happy than one in the 79th Sutta of the Second Collection, wherein Gotama, asked if there was any absolute happiness on earth, is shown saying : "Ay, when, in *jhāna* a man has devas present with him and converses with them." How is not this overlooked !

Now the orthodox *jhāna*-formula expressly prescribes elimination of happiness and rapture ; hence am I doubtful whether, in these poets' allusions to *jhāna*, we may not have an idiom about it over which the formula *had not yet* exerted influence. The formula shows a practice cultivating the art of making one's self empty of one's own thoughts, perceptions, feelings, leaving the self purely attentive (*sato*) and indifferent (*upekkho*). And there it leaves you. These possibly older poems—poems composed when formula-making was in its infancy—are not clear either as to any specific purpose for which so frequent testimony to *jhāna* as a familiar practice was cultivated. But that it was another term for what we call meditation, reflection, contemplation should *not* be accepted by the English reader.

## NOT MEDITATION

And this I say to differ from the way my immaturity in the past led me to word references to *jhāna*.

One context in particular might have checked me. In a poem of six couplets (435-40) a brahmin disciple, known as Bather-seer : Nhātaka-muni, says :

Wisdom's seven branches practising,  
The 'powers' five, the 'forces' too,  
Enriched with *jhāna*-subtlety,  
So will I in the jungle dwell.  
From all corrupting thoughts set free,  
With heart all pure and undefiled,  
Often reflecting and immune,  
So will I in the jungle dwell.

Here we have *jhāna* and reflection (*paccavekkhanto*) held to be requiring a separate treatment. And for us, reflection is distinctly work of, as we say, threshing things out, of pondering, of absorption in that mental continuum which the *jhāna* formula, and for me, the older *tabula rasa jhāna* prescribe as hindersome. Hence when the reader comes across these renderings : of the ex-peasant :

Go meditate, Sumangala, ay, go  
And meditate, Sumangala, and bide  
Earnest and diligent ! (43.)

and the admonished Katiyāna, a brahmin disciple :

Contemplate, O Katiyāna !  
Concentrate, conquer, O Katiyāna ! (414.)

I would ask him to see in the emphatic *jhāya* ! and *jhāyahi* ! a bidding not so much to 'meditate', or 'contemplate', as to muse, that is, to hold himself alert and ready should there come to him that sort of inspiration for which in Hebrew scripture, we see men like Samuel, Elijah and the prophets all attent.



I am not saying that, in the poets' outlook, pondering, reflection had not its uses. Clearly it had. I have no first-hand acquaintance with the modern aims of Indian crosslegged absorption. Nor would I debar, from the practice of it in the past, a passive waiting for self-born intuitions to arise. But that old Buddhist *jhāna* positively implied the seeking of psychic intercourse I am very sure. Else had we not found in the Suttas such a context as "What is it to have attained to devas? To be practising *jhāna*" (*Gradual Sayings*, ii, p. 192).

Nor would I maintain that deva-converse was the sole aim of *jhāna*. There was 'amity-*jhāna*' and there was 'bones-*jhāna*'. In the former, witness Commentary on the first couplet and that on verses 38 and 151. Here also we have *jhāna* dancing attendance on formulas. In these too we find Buddhism cultivating the will 'to make become' in spiritual growth which is its very essence. Formulas might, and did, tend to stifle this uprush of the seeking will; on the other hand, they in some cases emphasize it, being an enumeration of stages in its progress.

Of these formulas there is one in particular, of now five, now six heads which in the Suttas, and in our poems is linked with *jhāna*. That it is so is contributive evidence to the rightness of meaning which I attribute to *jhāna*, namely, that it was psychic training. This formula is known as that of the *abhiññā's*, or higher knowledges.<sup>1</sup> The five were supernormal movement (levitation, etc.), *deva*-sight, memory of former lives, thought-reading, *deva*-hearing. (A sixth of moral import, was at some time added.) These, in the Suttas, are usually introduced with the *jhāna*-formula preceding. Now in one Sutta-context three are selected to be set over against the brahmin technical term of *te-vijja* (*te-Vidyā*: 'thrice wise', i.e. learned in the three Vedas), so that the New Word of the Sakyas might be fitted

<sup>1</sup> 'Knowledges' is good Scottish.



## LIFTING THE VEIL

into the 'old bottles'. Readers of the anthology will note the frequent reference to the three. Thus Addhakāsī :

Ne'er would I more, again and yet again,  
Run on the round of rebirth and of death.  
Now real and true for me the Triple Lore,  
Accomplished is the bidding of the Lord.

And Vacchagotta :

The Threefold Lore is mine, and I excel  
In musing, am adept in calm of mind.

In only one line do I find the term *abhiññā* used : Uppala-vaṇṇā, known elsewhere in the Canon, claims to "have realized the six higher knowledges" (233), and she was famed as a psychic. Anuruddha was so too, and he makes repeated reference to *jhāna* (892 ff., 905, 917), and to 'the threefold lore'.

To English readers an outstanding difference in this anthology as compared with those of other religions will be the absence of any appeal to a Highest envisaged as a Person apart from the man or woman of the quest that is aimed at and often claimed as having been won. Let them never forget that Buddhism was born as the child of a cult of Immanence, which had brought Deity from 'above' or elsewhere into the very soul of man as his ideal Self. With the need of inquiring into this Self its founder began. But his conviction will appear to have been, that the 'way' to find that Highest Self lay in winning onwards ever through a More leading on towards a Most. With the broadening rift with the current teaching, the followers of the Founder broke away from Immanence, and confined themselves to the pursuit of what I might call 'a Most-less More'. To attain on earth the threshold of a Most was held to be the utmost

that was possible. 'The rest was silence', and that came to be called nirvana.

Into this outlook appeal by 'prayer' came not at all. It had been fading out in the cult of Immanence. Supplication in the Upanishads is hard to find, as compared with Veda and with Western cults. That which mainly takes its place is the learning to know, to realize man's intimate kinship with THAT from Whom "he need no more shrink away". And the new call brought in by the Sakyans was to win, to attain, to 'make become' by work of will worded as intense effort, energy, endeavour. As to that the West needs yet to learn from the East, that prayer rightly conceived is at least as much work of co-operating effort of will as of perpetual asking.

By 'co-operating' I have in mind two ways. In any Christian or Islamic manual of religious life, reference to these two ways would be as plentiful as in these poems it is defective. That manual would speak of an aligning of the praying will with the Divine Will, and also of a community willing so to be aligned. These poems here and there refer to a supreme ideal with an 'all hail', but when the ideal is made personal, he is never other than a 'Buddha'. The glorified man has intervened, and what Victor Hugo refers to as

Au fond de l'Idéal Dieu fait signe !

is in terms only of an idea, as I have shown. The essential thing is that the Ideal is there, commanding men's loyalty. It were ill to call this atheism.

The other 'co-operating' is all but absent. That Buddhist monks could and can chant together is true yesterday as to-day, but in these poems it is the lonely man or woman who, for supplication, gives us the intense will of the aspiring willer.

But even thus limiting themselves, Buddhists, of the 'old

## LIFTING THE VEIL

rock' at least, were far-sighted enough to be sure that, in cultivating a More on earth, they could add to that a view of the More lying both beyond and ahead of earth-life. They believed, both that they could cultivate a memory of life preceding present earth-life, and also an acquaintance with life immediately following present earth-life. To this extent the so-called Rationalist cannot claim fellowship with these poets. With him they may have drawn down the blinds on the ultimate Goal conceived as consummated Man; but they kept open vision on the goodly company of man awaiting them in the More, the More of to-morrow, who was about them to-day. And in that they did this, they were wiser than most of us.

And the best that *jhāna* brought—and it is no mean best—was the lifting the veil from vision confined otherwise to horizons of this one short life.

## Chapter X

### LIFE IN THE ORDER :

#### (2) TRAINING AND SERVICE

While 'musing' and leisure for opportunity to cultivate it were admittedly a valued advantage in life in the Order, it was by no means the sole preoccupation therein. The immediate positive object in that life was the task for each member of shaping himself or herself, rough-hewn only by life in the world, into that ideal of the 'man' to which the term '*arahāṇ*', i.e. worthy, came to be applied. This word has a curious evolution in the Pali records, into which my friend and colleague I. B. Horner has carefully gone in her Buddhist *Theory of Man Perfected*. As virtually an equivalent of our 'saint' it does not, I find, belong to the earliest Buddhism. And it is noteworthy, that our poets *make very slight use of it*. The men use it in four contexts only ; the women not once. That I have used it twice where in Pali it does not occur was a historical blunder.<sup>1</sup> The Commentary uses it and the abstract noun constantly. And in no way does the canonical exegesis betray its late compilation in Pali more clearly than in both this use of '*arahāṇ*' and of another term '*aññā*', or confession (lit. coming to know) of the status of 'worthiness' won, a word not once used in the poems.

The term '*arahāṇ*', which starts in the Canon as meaning 'medicine-man', magician, and is then used for just 'convert' to the new faith, in what suggests editorial glosses, came gradually to signify a man or woman who had completed that training

<sup>1</sup> In *Brethren*, ver. 68 ; in *Sisters*, ver. 66.

and service which in the Order was expected from 'elders': (*thera, therī*). There is, in the poems, no suggestion that in other worlds a consummation of the 'Man' could be looked for, exceeding in 'worth' any spiritual evolution possible while encased by an earth-body. His future, unlike any 'thusness', was unknown as the flight of the flown bird (ver. 92).

But the fundamental importance of morality as basis to the training (*sikkhā*) is stressed. And that some form of service in all but the genuine recluses of the jungle is expected we also find.

As to the seeing in the moral 'habit' (*sīla*), the basis of all holy living, the reader should ever bear in mind the new emphasis laid on its importance in both Jainist and Sakyan reform movements. In earlier teaching morality was mainly a matter of propriety, of 'what is done'; it was not made of prime religious importance. Religiously important was the realizing identity of nature in man and Deity. To realize that this involved an idea of conduct as *a making explicit this identity* depended much on the concept held of Deity. And it is perhaps significant that we find no word in Sanskrit or Pali for 'holy', by which we should express our idea of perfectly moral Deity. Early Buddhism, preoccupied with growth in a More, rather than with any clear concept of a Most, shows its Founder concerned, not with holiness in a Most, but with moral conduct in worlds of the More only, in life. We find him recommending men, if they would hereafter enjoy the company of worthier beings, to cultivate here already the morals they believed were observed by these, namely, the Brahmā-devas.<sup>1</sup> While here, they should look upon moral habit as the firm earth on which they walked.<sup>2</sup>

Consider these verses:

Gavaccha's, showing an inclusive 'cameo' of the good man:

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues*, i, No. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> *Kindred Sayings*, v, 65, etc.

## LIFE IN THE ORDER

In wisdom strong, guided by virtue's rule intent,  
To concentration's rapture given, vigilant,  
Partaking of such fare as brings thee good,  
So here, with passions quenched, await the hour (12),

a picture elaborated by Upasena (577-86), but rendered yet more tersely by Punṇa the missionary :

Only virtue here is highest, but the wise man is supreme.<sup>1</sup>  
He who wisdom hath and virtue, he 'mong men and gods is victor.  
(70.)

This verse we find woven into the monk 'Moral-Man's', (Sīlavat's) sermon on morals, said to have been spoken to the converts he made of men sent by a king to murder him. In this homily we find the layman's outlook prescribed, not that of the monk :

For moral culture well applied doth bring  
Near to our reach success of every kind.  
Let the wise man protect his morals well,  
Who doth to threefold happiness aspire :  
A good name and the gain of this world's goods  
And when this life is o'er, the joys of heaven.

Of such is the outlook in king Asoka's rock-cut Edicts. But when monk talked to monk or ascetic, the outlook is different. Thus Phussa :

A fool with mind puffed up, distraught,  
For whom no moral code exists :  
Gear white of hue doth he deserve,  
For saffron robe what use hath he ? (973.)

the layman's white wear evidently witnessing to a lower level of morals. And happy Bhaddiya winds up his verses with one reason for that happiness :

<sup>1</sup> *Sīlam eva idha aggaṃ, paññāvaṃ paṇ'uttamo* ; = ver. 619.



## THE NUNS AND MORALS

To-day, a happy winner, see,  
At ease, all fear and fright removed,  
In forest meditation plunged  
Dwells Bhaddiya the Godha's son.  
Firm planted on the moral code,  
In clarity and insight trained,  
In due succession have I won  
Release with every fetter gone. (865.)

It is however noteworthy that we do not find the word *sīla* mentioned in the women's poems. They are fluent in testifying to the past power over them of sense-desires (*kāma*) and to the power over these, over the craving for these that they have won. But of morals as a 'basis' for holiness I find no word. They are more occupied with the merging from "the gloom of ignorance" in the new emancipation their world-forsaking has won for them. Selā's verse is typical:

On every hand the love of pleasure yields,  
And the thick gloom of ignorance is rent  
In twain . . . (59.)

We are apt to speak—I do not say, speak wrongly—of woman as the moral buttress of the community. This is the aspect of woman in the home, as wife and mother. But when woman has broken the ties of home, it is not this buttress that she is keen to be. It is to win knowledge, begrudged, not to the man but to her, that she is afoot and striving. It is in the ignorance in which she has been kept that she sees her chief bane. And so it is of the man, not the woman, that the Commentary repeatedly tells, that he "was meditating on ethical conduct", or "exercising himself in insight on a basis of ethical meditation" (pp. 52, 53, 76, etc.). 'Ethical conduct' is here not *sīla*, but *chariya*, a word indicating, as it often does in the Asokan Edicts, "walking" or "faring" according to righteousness. Let me not be held to be pressing the point overmuch when I say, that



in the compound term *vidyā-charaṇa* : 'knowledge-conduct', woman's ideal was just then the former half, man's the latter. Woman was pressing forward to something in life that for her was new ; man was more intent on maintaining the things making for stability.

This is not to affirm that the woman in the poems reveals moral carelessness. But she looks more at the springs of the unmoral, the immoral, than at any code in the moral. Her cry is, ' cut out this craving springing from sense, ay, this life, hotbed of sense-desire ! '

Craving with root of craving is o'ercome ! (15.)

and

Hast thou not seen sorrow and ill in all  
Life's elements ? Come thou not back to birth !  
Cast out the passionate desire again to be,  
So shalt thou go thy ways calm and serene.

The pity of it was, that in giving that will by which she was striving after a Better the ' bad name ' of thirst (*tanhā*), she was blocking her view to a sound view of that striving. The word used with such religious uplift by the Hebrew poet :

My soul is **ATHIRST** for God, even for the living God !

was by her banned as the channel of evil. She was all the time nobly athirst, yet discerned it not. Tālapuṭa's vision was better.

Neither had the four woman-poets who had professionally sinned against the moral code any hankering to sing about such a code. Ambapālī in much detail and apt wording faces the truth about her decayed treasures of the past :

Such hath this body been. Now age-weary and weak and unsightly  
Home of manifold ills ; old house whence the mortar is dropping.  
So and not otherwise runneth the rune, the word of the Soothsayer.

(270.)

## NO OUTLOOK

Vimalā rejoices in her different outlook, but not as 'moral' (72-6); Abhaya's mother ponders negatively over the change (33 f.), and Aḍḍhakāsi turns her back on will to live (25 f.). There is no hymning the beauty in virtue as conduct. They had become in a certain way 'free'; they do not rejoice in being rule-bound, even though they were living under a Rule (Vinaya).

It is very possible, that if early Buddhism had not severed itself from the current cult of Immanence—as had happened when these poems took their present form—it might have gone far in framing into the concept of a Divine Self that perfect moral holiness, which would have lent unity to moral aspiration and retrospect. But with the rift from Brahmanism, it had let go the Most from its ideal; it cultivated a More only. And the More means many ways; converging towards a One, it may be, but intentness on the ways.

In the second place, in that the poems are clearly in earnest about the new man, the better man, to be fostered by life in the Order, the curious anomaly arises, that the finer the result achieved, the more certain was the expectation that life thus bettered would be finally ended at death.

Great spirits, they will understand  
The spirit by that Spirit taught :  
With passion gone, sane and immune,  
This spirit, body yielding up,  
Will clean 'go out', sane and immune (704) :—

so Udāyin, and :—

He who witless doth not understand, but maketh  
Cause for life renewed, comes back again to sorrow.  
Wherefore he who knows creates no more new causes.  
May I ne'er so lie again with scattered members ! (152) ;

so Mahākāla. Of course it was not 'I' who so lay among the charnel-field bones; it was but his discarded instruments. Herein our own way of talking is not an ace better than was his, and greatly to our shame is it that I have to say so. But all Buddhism has, as it were, conspired to disregard their Founder's *caveat*, not to look on body or mind as the 'man' or self. And the poets who thus speak of 'I' may be dated from such a line as this. Their teaching, their Order had so far gone astray, has remained astray.

So far from daunting the training in the 'finished' man, it seems to have acted as a spur, that growth was within hail of maturity, and that maturity would usher in (a) ceasing of 'life', (b) entrance of a 'no man' on a mystery, presumably spaceless, timeless, called 'waning out' (*nibbāna*).

I have used the word 'growth', albeit writers on Buddhism sadly neglect to recognize that it was used. The word (*vuddhi*) unfortunately means also not organic, but atomic increase, and hence prosperity. And this dulls force in the English. Where good practices are maintained, the 'growth' to be expected (not merely hoped for), has been rendered 'prosper'.<sup>1</sup> Confession of fault as bringing about 'growth' is wrongly called 'custom'.<sup>2</sup> The poems, I admit, do not make good use of the term. Here in Gosāla's verse, where I say

... to foster there the growth ...

the Pali has

... lonely may I brood over' (*anubrūhayam*),

a notable verb, but only implicitly a growing. The yearning for growth we have seen well expressed by Suppiya, Ekavihāriya

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues of the Buddha*, ii, p. 79 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 94.

# GROWTH

and Tālapuṭa. But mainly, it is to be confessed, we have more of the contrast between A and Z than of the striving onward, the progress to be seen, in B to Y. *Contrast* between A and Z we find everywhere ; to cite only one :

O but 'tis long I've wandered down all time

Not knowing . . .

And never finding what I needed sore.

But now mine eyes have seen . . .

And now I know . . . (160, Nuns'.)

We know that when the Founder was moved to begin his mission, it was men as plants at different stages of growth that revealed to him, here was the religious message man needed. But actually he began on the note, not of the stationary plant, but of the onward moving wayfarer. For his day growth lay too near the physical accompaniment of decay. His own explanation to the question "What is becoming?" with its inclusion of will or desire as rain to the plant's thirst, has been too obviously man-handled by the editor to retain the hopeful character it will have had.<sup>1</sup>

But there was, if not 'growth', this very notion of becoming (*bhava*) that leaves a more positive mark on the poems. We find at once very frequent use of 'become', both noun and verb (a frequency easily overlooked by the English reader, who has also disvalued his own strong word *wairthan*, become), namely, some 122 times in the poems. Readers will see, from a few samples, at once the worth surviving in both, and the worsening undergone by the noun.

alone and in the woods  
Exceeding pleasant doth his life become. (537.)

<sup>1</sup> *Gradual Sayings*, i, 203.

## LIFE IN THE ORDER

Here nothing hinders the translator from using this in English so unpopular verb. Again in

If he be blithesome, all the four quarters become  
Cordial well-wishers, e'en if his lot be not happy (555),

'become' is amenable. But in other lines :

A raja thou deservest to become. (822.)

Where'er 'tis safe and free from peril, there  
Go thou, my boy ; become not care beset. (82.)

Thou who in faith didst leave the world behind,  
Mittā, Amica, lover of thy friends become ! (8, Nuns'.)

English evasion has prevailed, and I have shirked the strong verb, as to-day I should never do, using other phrases. Hence readers of the poems cannot realize how frequently this word figures, both in prose and in verse. Everywhere it is used to mean some change, and as often as not change for the better, hence 'growth' of a sort.

It is when we come to the noun, that the evolved worsening in meaning shows itself. Look at these :

Void of delight forms of becoming are. (710.)

Burnt up in me is all that doth defile,  
All (re-)becomings extirpated are. (67.)

Becoming that eternally persists is not ! (121.)

Hast thou not seen sorrow and ill in all  
The springs of life ? Come thou not back to birth !  
Lust in becoming—if thou cleanse from thee,  
So shalt thou go thy ways calm and serene. (14, Nuns'.)

In none of these is it in the English version clear, that the noun 'becoming' (*bhava*) is there in the Pali. That I sinned in good company, immature, is my sole excuse.

Retrospective as they mainly are, we cannot fairly withhold the admission, how intensely these poets and their cloistral world were set in the will to endeavour to grow into a Better from out of a world that was, in its wider life, too much contented with a Worse—into a More out of a Less.

It is true that, as compared with poets of other religions, the End and ultimate purpose of growth is less well worded. Worded it is, but in a way that suggests shrivelling up more than blossoming out into. More is it maybe to their credit, that their faith in their endeavour shows so strongly. Very reticent they were on any effort to put into words their Goal. Never, for instance, do the women-poets give us "word of quasi-amorous self-surrender to the person or image of the Beloved :—I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine ! of the Song of Solomon, or the *rex virgineus, sponsus dulcissimus* ! of Abbess Herrad's psalm—a tradition evolving naturally around a *youthful* Saviour, and less around a memory of one who devoted years of middle and old age to his flock, dying as its great-grandfather, and whom that flock came only later to look upon as *dev'âtideva* : Beyond-divine of the divine. " ' Father ' of me, child of his mouth " is the utmost length to which they go,

Thou art Buddha ! thou art Master ! and thine,  
Thy daughter am I, issue of thy mouth (356),

or again as their kind and noble friend (*kalyāna-mitta* : 213). But never for them or their brethren did the paternal relation centre round any idea of a very real and eternal " father of all of things that have become and are to become ". We find this idiom in the Suttas, borrowed from current culture, but never taken over in worship.

It is true that the venerable founder bade his followers take



as their light and refuge 'Spirit', 'Dhamma', and no other, in the religious sense, as I hold, then attaching to those terms : *Ātmā, Dhamma* : God as eternally static amid the evanescent ; the dynamic 'Ought-to-be' amid the actually 'Is.' But the interpretation of them as now given in Buddhism was, it may be, even then beginning to emerge, witness the lines :

E'en as billow sweeping o'er the mighty ocean  
So may round of birth and age o'erwhelm and drown thee.  
See that thou e'en thou dost make thyself an isle of safety ;  
For nought else is there may serve thee as a refuge ! (412.)

(I would remind readers that 'isle of safety' and 'light' or 'lamp' are in Pali the same word : *dīpa*, and there is often doubt which was really meant.) Here it is, as translators now prefer, the actual man-of-earth who is to be the all-in-all to and by himself, and not the More in him of the current Immanence. The sturdy independence appeals to our day of agnostic scholarship and science, blinding us to the position in Indian religion when Buddhism was born—and also to where we too are myopic. Great religions do not fling that very child-as-yet, the man, into 'the mighty ocean' to sink or swim. It is only when religion is flattened out into just ethics that this happens. And the very compound—a very unusual one—used by Tāla-puta : *att'atthiko* : seeker of the self, belongs to the very cradle of Buddhism, born of the current Immanence.

'Just ethics,' I said, reminding me of Emerson's " 'mere morality' as if one said 'poor God, with nobody to help Him !' " And I repeat, *sīla*, moral-habit was not *mainly* made negative formula, as with the Hebrew Ten Commandments, but *wholly* 'the not to be done'. But let this not be put, as Buddhists put it, on the shelf, that in the First Sutta of the First Collection (first, not historically but in importance) each of the five *sīlas* is developed positively, in, it is claimed, the founder's



own words, a lovely ethic, and, the poems lead me to believe, known in the day of their writers.

For instance, the wisdom that quarrels not is well represented :

People can never really understand,  
That we are here but for a little spell ;  
But they who grasp this truth indeed  
Suffer all strife and quarrels to abate.

Sabhiya was remonstrating with monks of the seceding Devadatta group, it is said. And the widening picture of the cloisters opening to us in Miss Horner's fine translation of the entire *Book of the Discipline* reveals quarrels—some of us knew it already—as an all too frequent marring of the life. Yet, as with our own daily press, we know, that such jars are found as interruptions only of the normal. And the very prominence given to Sabhiya's verses in Dhammapada and Vinaya point rather to this, than to the Order as a hotbed of strife.

Brahmadatta's verses too would adorn any Christian book :

Whence riseth wrath for him who void of wrath  
Holds on the even tenour of his way,  
Self-tamed, serene, by highest insight free ?

Worse of the two is he who, when reviled,  
Reviles again. Who doth not, when reviled,  
Reville again, a twofold victory wins.  
Both of the other and himself he seeks  
The good ; for he the other's angry mood  
Doth understand and soothe . . . (441 f.)

Revata again, brother of the great Sāriputta, has verses of lofty loveliness on amity (*mettā*) :

Since I went forth from home to homeless life  
Ne'er have I harboured conscious wish or plan  
Un-Ariyan or linked with enmity.

## LIFE IN THE ORDER

Ne'er mine the quest all this long interval :—  
 'Let's smite our fellow creatures, let us slay,  
 Let them be brought to pain and misery.'  
 Amity I avow made infinite,  
 Well-trained, by orderly progression grown,  
 Even as by the Buddha it is taught.  
 With all am I a friend, comrade to all,  
 And to all creatures kind and merciful.  
 A heart of amity I cultivate,  
 And ever in good will is my delight. (645-8.)

There is only one way perhaps in which we of another tradition could here go further. We might commend the will to make the woeful happier. It is only, if I err not, with the women that we find, not so much profession, as here, of the will to amity, but more, pity and effort to help. I find no such tribute to this in the men-poets as I find in Chandā's verses and no such grave effort to uplift as in Patāchārā's.

Fallen on evil days was I of yore.  
 No husband had I, nor no child, no friends  
 Nor kin—whence could I food or raiment find?  
 As beggars go I took my bowl and staff  
 And sought me alms, begging from house to house.  
 Then came I where a woman mendicant  
 Shared with me food and drink, and welcomed me  
 And said, 'Come forth into our homeless life !'  
 In gracious pity did she let me come—  
 Patāchārā—and heard me take the vows ;  
 And thenceforth words of wisdom and of power  
 She spake, and set before my face the way  
 Of going to the crown of life. (122-5.)

"Crown of life" is perhaps too Christian : *param'atthe niyo-jayi* (she) linked into the supreme Aim'. And Patāchārā : Her "500 bereaved mothers", which is simply a Pali idiom for 'lots of them', whether on many occasions or one, are thus

## THE BEREAVED MOTHER

made to feel a sheltering arm—not Patāchārā's, but that of Facing-the-Truth :

The way by which men come we cannot know,  
Nor can we see the path by which they go.  
Why mournest then for him who came to thee,  
Lamenting through thy tears, 'My son ! my son !'  
Seeing thou knowest not the way he came,  
Nor yet the manner of his leaving thee ?  
Weep not, for such is here the life of man.  
Unask'd he came, unbidden went he hence.  
Lo ! ask thyself again whence came thy son  
To bide on earth this little breathing-space ?  
By one way come and by another gone,  
As man to die and pass to other births :  
So hither and so hence—why should one weep ? (127-30.)

Gentle in their austerity, and recorded as giving consolation, to their enjoining that sturdy detachment, which we now call getting rid of self-pity I render tribute. Of such too was the better-known episode of the bereaved mother Kisagotamī (p. 106), who, in her verses,<sup>1</sup> tells nothing of her being bidden to seek mustard-seed where no one had as yet died, but weaves her many woes together. She too had to face a very common lot of mothers and, the Commentary says, not feel with others so stricken, but steel herself as in no way exceptionally smitten. But commend it as the best consolation that original Buddhism could have given I cannot. There was a better recorded, had those women known of it : the Saying of the Sonless, Motherless.<sup>2</sup> Namely how, over against the three fears of parting mother and son : famine, war and illness, there was ever the Way of the worlds where both might meet again. Patāchārā recognizes other births for the child ; for the mother she had

<sup>1</sup> Only the Commentary tells this story.

<sup>2</sup> *Gradual Sayings*, i, p. 161.

only her worldless nirvana in reserve, wherein the man, wherein the mother might find comfort, but as mother no ! Nor even as *homo* ! Twenty-three years have passed for time's hand and for fact-facing to heal, yet should I be still the woeful one had I not long ago, as if in a pit-accident, broken through and found my 'lost' son. There is no need to wait for those "other births" for this.

To come back : both monks and nuns pay high tribute to the spiritual help life in the Order brought them from the wisdom and goodwill of the teacher of either sex. I have given what Sumana says (p. 23).

But there the monk seems to stop ; only the woman testifies to bodily cherishing and mental tonic.

That the teaching was by member to members of the Order only is to limit the Order's work. The Commentary leaves us in no doubt, that they still carried on the original practice of the going around to teach, no less than did the Jains. The day had not yet come when we read only of people flocking to the monastery to give and to be taught. The pretty fancy in Sukkā's poem points to listeners not only in the settlement where the tree-spirit, enthusing over her preaching, wanders about the town rallying people :

What would ye men of Rājagaha have,  
What have ye done ? that mute and idle here  
Ye lie about as if bemused with wine,  
Nor wait upon Sukkā, while she reveals  
The precious gospel by the Buddha taught.  
The wise in heart methinks were fain to quaff  
That life's elixir, once won never lost,  
That wellethe ever up in her sweet words,  
E'en as the wayfarer welcomes the rain. (54 f.)

Of Sukkā elsewhere we hear nothing, but other poets : Dhammadinnā and Bhaddā are famed in other books.

## ANIMAL REBIRTH

These do not in their poems give us their sermons, and this leaves us wishing we had a specimen or two ; wishing also we could learn thereby whether they made a practice, still I am told followed in evening congregations on Ceylon on full-moon evenings, of yarning at length about Jātakas,<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'birth'-stories, wherein the founder is so often recorded in some rebirth as animal. For myself I hold it to the credit, and at the same time to the relative antiquity of these poems, that not a single poem save two claims to include memory of such animal births. These are Tālapuṭa's, and in the (probably Jain) poem of Isidāsī, last but one in the 76, a gruesome and repulsive confession. With this we may contrast the worthy lines by Pajāpatī, who alludes to rebirths as a human only :

Oh ! but 'tis long I've wandered down all time,  
Living as mother, father, brother, son,  
And as grandparent in the ages past—  
Not knowing how and what things really are. (159.)

---

<sup>1</sup> The Canonical book of these is, as to the 'story', reckoned to be of our era, yet are some such stories found in the Suttas of the Canon.

## Chapter XI

### BIRTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE POEMS

I turn, in conclusion, to the question raised at the end of the first chapter :—How far can we, with any pretence to certainty, assign to these twin anthologies any definite place in the long-drawn-out procession of Indian religious literature ?

Neither space nor adequate scholarship is present here to deal with the question worthily. I can but point to features suggesting now an earlier, now a later origin. And even then the fact, that we have here, not prose but poetry, and in the latter, verses written not for mere mnemonic convenience—a frequent resource in a bookless world—but from sheer love of poetry as such, may mislead us.

Let us take first, for instance, the use of the family name Gotama and the institutional name Buddha : the Awakened. In the prose writings of the Canon we find educated men, the brahmins, using the former, with or without the prefixed *samaṇa*, an equivalent to the modern *sannyāsi*. But we find men of the Order avoiding such usage, and referring to the founder by such terms as *bhagavā* (a name for teacher), *satthā* (teacher), *tathāgata* and *sugata* : these two, of a certainty, names that will have come in with a rise of a founder-legend long after his day. 'Buddha' is very seldom used as appellative, although not seldom in referring to him. It too is a legend-word. And I have for years pointed out, that the omission of the term in the record of the First Council, held after his death, to settle the



## BUDDHA, GOTAMA

contents and disposal of such Rules and Sayings as were yet in being, is a proof that he was *not then* generally known as 'the Buddha'. Further that, a century after his death, at the Second Council a like omission is seen. Verily the Buddha-fancy was a flower of slow growth. It needed an *appendix in verse* in that record to bring in the name.

Now the anthology makes frequent use of it. Is this due to the relatively late date of those many verses using it, or to the poet laying hold of a word not yet used in prose?

Again many verses give him his family name. Such a coming near to a man who became quasi-deified had died out before the exegesists of the fifth century A.D. wrote, nor is he ever so named to-day. It is a loss to Buddhism, even as the little use of Jesus as compared with the institutional name of Christ (so grating in English) is a loss to episcopal Christianity. We find Gotama nine times in the anthology, and how does it not help to bring the living and loved Helper before us, so much better than the institutional (and for us ugly) word Buddha! Here are the personal-name contexts:

His robe spread Gotama and laid him down,  
Like unto lion in a rocky cave. (367.)

Because of what the training doth prescribe  
Revealed to us by glorious Gotama (488),

and so in verse 375. Again:

For never thought for raiment, nor for food,  
Nor where to rest doth the great mind affect,  
Immeasurable, of our Gotama. (1089.)

('Our' is a liberty here, but the pronoun so used is not infrequent.)



## BIRTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE POEMS

And the nuns :

'Twas he who taught me, even Gotama. (136.)

Oh ! surely for the good of countless lives  
Did Māyā bring forth Gotama. (162.)

Much more numerous are the references to 'Buddha', and also, let it not be forgotten, to Buddhas, for the lineage of such helpers of men is very much a part of the legend, nor is Gotama held to have been the last, though the next, Metteyya, is not mentioned. Here are a few examples :

The phrase "the Buddha's bidding (or teaching : *sāsana*) has been done", verse 13, and about 15 other verses.

The phrase "by the Buddha taught" : verse 21 and three others.

The claim to spiritual kinship :

Buddha's daughter I (47),

and three other verses.

Recognition at sight of :

. . . and there I saw  
The Buddha, the Immaculate . . .  
Lo ! on my knees I worshipped . . . (108 f.)

And mark the strong emphasis on the personal relation by the girl Anopamā :

He taught me dhamma out of his pity : Gotama !

Acclaim :—

Buddha the Wake, the Hero, hail ! all hail ! (157.)

Thou art Buddha ! thou art Master ! and thine  
Thy very daughter am I, issue of thy mouth. (336.)

The wondrous Buddha, sovran of the world ! (229.)

We meet too with the amplified term : *sam-buddha*, that came to be very frequent :

And then I saw the 'Very Wakened' come.

And the name 'Buddha' might be cited as often, relatively, from the monks' poems.

From these citations three alternatives arise : (1) Poems where the founder is called 'Gotama' are earlier than those calling him 'Buddha'. (2) None of the poems naming him 'Buddha' is older than the Second Council, or, if they are, the term was being used by contemporaries, despite the silence in that Council's records. (3) Editors at the Patna (Third Council) revision, or earlier inserted a good many 'buddha's' where had been Gotama or *sattihā* (master, or teacher), *because of the growing vogue of the name*.

One hindrance in the adoption of (3) is, that in a few contexts, Gotama and Buddha occur in the same couplet ! In Paripunnaka's, laden; let the reader of Pali note, with extra feet, we get :

When he, the all-seeing Gotama, the Buddha blest  
Himself taught Dhamma unto us (91),

and Sona-Kutikaṇṇa brings them close :

His robe spread Gotama and laid him down,

Thereafter in the presence of the Chief  
The Wake (*sambuddha*) did Sona, framing goodly speech,  
Disciple of the Buddha Dhamma teach. (367 f.)

Has anything editorial been here committed ?

Nor can we arrive with confidence at conclusions by examining the poems to which known names of first missionaries are affixed—this I have dealt with. Even the poem ascribed to his son Rāhula claims he is lucky in being "child of the Buddha".

## BIRTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE POEMS

Did an editor change *Gotama-putto* to *putto-buddha-ssa*? Vangisa, known to us by the Suttas also, even calls himself Gotama!

Renounce conceit, O Gotama! . . . (1219.)

in virtue, says the Commentary, of his discipleship. But Vangisa was, as noted improviser, somewhat a spouter of epithets: "the Buddha of the sun's high lineage" (1212), "the peerless master of our caravan"—a very old title of this gospel of wayfaring and adventure!—"attend around the Well-Come One" (1238), etc. And Moggallāna too splashes about a little (1168, etc.). Better judges must decide, but generally speaking, the poet, wielder of the word, yet to some extent led by it, leaves us unsafe material for historical conjecture. Our own poets, if in serious vein, do not use the idiom they would, were they writing or speaking prose. Swinburne would not have said

Lay not thine hand upon me; let me go;  
Take off thine eyes that put the gods to shame,

had he been addressing a dirty beggar, or waving off importunate soliciting in the street. And we find the difference in idiom no less in Pali prose and poetry. The poet then, too, was more concerned to create moving pictures, than to show truthfully the where and the when of their happening.

I may be wrong, but I incline to see, in the curious and very interesting blend of the earlier and the later in the poems, much work done, it may be little by little, by both repeater and editor, neither of them unmindful to handle with reverence sayings venerable through age; and to see in the result a picture, not of the first decades of Buddhism only, nor of the succeeding two or three centuries only, but an interwoven tapestry of both. On the one hand we have the name 'Gotama' as the loved teacher and friend, on the other the name Buddha for an idea

## A POETIC MEDLEY

of wisdom and power incarnate. On the one hand we have the drum-beat of the gates to the Immortal opened, and of the Self, or Spirit who is immortal to be sought after as man's highest quest :

Who on the Fastness of the Crag  
Dwells seeker of the Self. (1097.)

Who in the world hath got beyond,  
Hath in the Immortal foothold won,  
Hath Dhamma to his bosom ta'en,  
And learnt to know the Aim supreme.

On the other we have fluent references to doctrines in lists and formulas : a Way of the growth of the very man become an eightfold category, and

The Starting-points of Mindfulness,  
The Powers Five, the Forces too,  
The Factors of Enlightenment,  
The Threefold Lore,

and so forth, all institutional doctrines, that suggest time in coming to numerical precision. On the one hand we have the felt sense of a glory in coming to be, as the very man grew in the Way, or as we should say, in holiness, literally, in spiritual health towards the becoming utterly well as man. On the other, we see a blotting out of life, life not of body and mind only, in the Void of nirvana. On the one hand, we see in both man and woman an indomitable will to advance, to persevere, to attain ; on the other, we see a triumphing in the abnegation of ' desire '.

If, in this medley, we see matters all of which will have been hymned by the contemporaries of the founder of Buddhism, we shall, I believe, go much astray. If we see in the anthology a pot-pourri of fragrant survivals of a date of between three and

## BIRTH AND SURVIVAL OF THE POEMS

four hundred years, we shall walk straighter. And if we learn to discern what is of the 'old rock' from what is younger, we shall, as we fare, get views over a landscape of the years. We shall not be ever saying: See! That is what the Buddha taught! We shall be wiser.

Much more in this little study could have been said, did space permit, for the work of these men and women of incorrigible will to grow out of and beyond the ordinary and the everyday in spiritual becoming—not as body and mind save as good tools for growth, but as each one, man, woman, very and intensely real—has long been beside me and helping me. They too were at heart with our Keble:

Yet stay awhile and see the calm leaves float  
Each to its rest beneath their parent shade.

They too with him, albeit in their own way, looked for new growth:

The trees on high, by towering cloud refreshed,  
With the new rain break forth in vigorous growth.  
In Usabha who longs for the Alone,  
And hath the forest-sense doth come  
To birth a very More in what is good. (110.)

'More': *bhiyyo*: it is the very pith and marrow of the New Word! I seem to find it too in Anuruddha's lines:

World-teacher unsurpassed, he when he learnt  
My mind's intent, taught me a Further yet (902)

—a Further: *uttarim*! How true of true religion! Cloister and jungle have their limitations, but in their aid to the will to grow in that More, they have played their part.

THE END